

THE EPIC RED SOX FAIL OF 2012

By Tom Verducci P. 38

WHAT MAKES A MAN KICK?

By Lee Jenkins P. 54

SEPTEMBER 10, 2012  
SI.COM

SPORTS Illustrated

NFL CONCUSSIONS

# The Other Half Of the Story

One of many women caring for retired NFL players, **Laurie Navon** frequently has her picture taken with her boyfriend, **Jim McMahon**—in case he wakes up one day and no longer remembers her

By *Melissa Segura*

P. 60





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SI HAS TWO COVERS THIS WEEK  
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## LEADING OFF

## AMERICAN IDYLL

Earth seems pretty small these days. You can sit in a coffee shop and watch soccer being played halfway around the world on your iPad while texting your friend in France and calling your cousin in Tokyo. But just when you think regional differences have disappeared, college football lands on your front porch. Wisconsin plays the way we think Wisconsin is supposed to play, with extremely large men opening holes for their running-back friends after snacking on cheese curds in the huddle. The Badgers beat Northern Iowa 26-21 in their opener at Camp Randall Stadium last Saturday. The telling stat was this: The Badgers threw 23 passes and ran 47 times, including 32 by Heisman candidate Montee Ball. In Madison they call that pretty.

Photograph by  
John Biever

Text by  
Michael  
Rosenberg











## LEADING OFF

### HORSESHOE GRAB

■ There are 60 or so Football Bowl Subdivision games on a typical fall weekend, compared with just 14 in the NFL. The sheer volume of the college game, combined with the variety of offenses, means it offers more made-for-YouTube plays in a single week than the NFL does in a month. And you never know which game will provide the highlight. If you tubed in for Urban Meyer's Ohio State debut at the Horseshoe last Saturday, Buckeyes receiver Devin Smith (15) rewarded you with the play of the week, perhaps even the play of the year: a preposterous, leaping, twisting one-handed TD catch in the Buckeyes' 56-10 rout of Miami of Ohio. If leaping, twisting one-handed TD catches don't impress you, maybe the fact that Smith appears to be looking at the camera will.

Photograph by  
Jamie Sabau









## LEADING OFF

### HAPPY UPENDING

■ The last time Clemson played, in January's Orange Bowl, West Virginia held the Tigers upside down by their ankles, shook them until all the change spilled from their pockets, dropped them on their heads and hung 70 points on them. Clemson had eight months to think about that humiliation, and needed but one night to show it was an aberration. On Saturday, Clemson beat its fellow Tigers, Auburn of the SEC, 26-19, to regain some respect, and perhaps some self-respect. Most significant, it wasn't Andre Ellington (23) and the Clemson offense that led the way but rather the maligned defense. The Tigers may yet end up back in the Orange Bowl as the ACC champions.

Photograph by  
Greg  
McWilliams/  
Icon SMI









## LEADING OFF

### ALOHA MEANS GOODBYE

■ USC may have set a record in the last decade for most appearances as both AP and Public Enemy Nos. 1. This is part of the allure of college football, isn't it? Everybody gets a helmet and either a white hat or a black one. The Trojans are back from their bowl ban for NCAA violations, and we do mean back: loaded and ready to make a run at another national title. Lane Kiffin's crew dished out the punishment at the Coliseum last Saturday, taking a 35-0 halftime lead over Hawaii in a 49-10 victory. The most eye-popping performance was that of wideout Marqise Lee (9), who pulled in 197 of Matt Barkley's 372 passing yards. Throw his name in the Heisman discussion (page 32).

Photograph by  
**John W.  
McDonough**





*A house divided. Home of Eric Harrell, Alabama fan, and his wife Jen, Auburn fan.*





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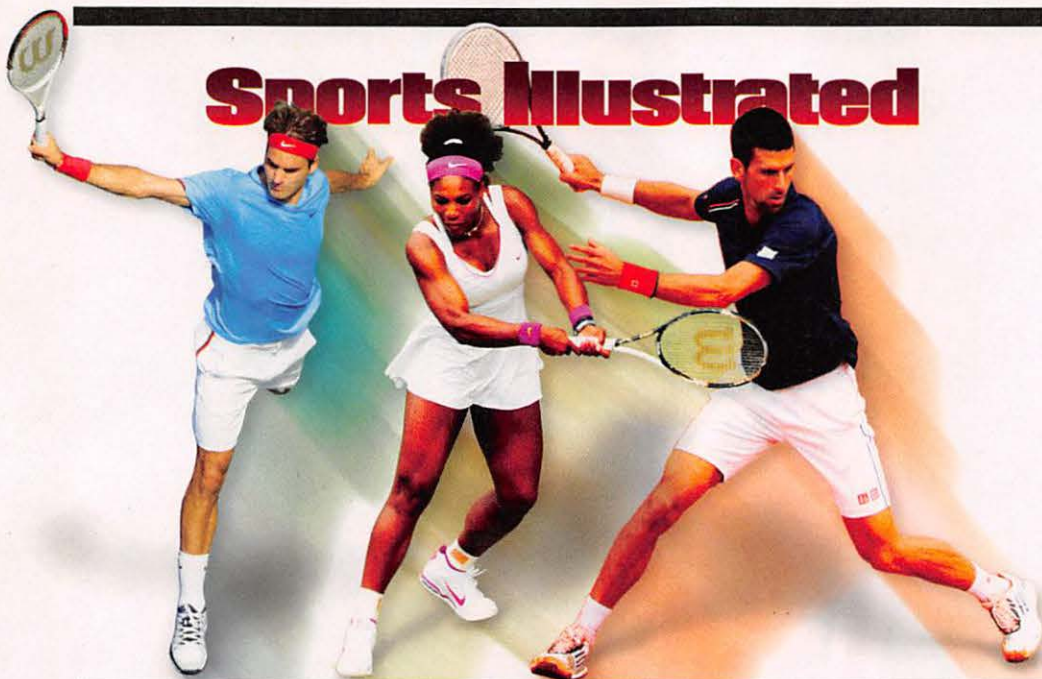
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## THREE THE HARD WAY

Rafael Nadal's left-knee injury sidelined him for the 2012 U.S. Open and opened up the men's side of the draw, but not by much. The road to the title still goes through world No. 1 **Roger Federer** and No. 2 **Novak Djokovic**, who have combined to win eight of the last 14 Grand Slams. On the women's side **Serena Williams**, fresh off pummeling the field at the Olympics, rolled through the first week of play at Flushing Meadow without dropping a set and is the clear favorite. Which of these Big Three do you have your money on? Follow all the court action at **SI.com** including...

### ► Beyond the Baseline:

Courtney Nguyen's daily tennis blog stays on top of the U.S. Open's biggest story lines and previews the key matches. Make sure you catch her Daily Bagel to start your day.

► **Ground Strokes:** The day's most arresting images plus shots of the Open's most memorable moments and a glimpse of all the action through Instagram.

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NFL fans = Pavlov's dogs. When the bell rings (or the ball is kicked off), we come running. NFL management knows this.

### BRYAN ARMEN GRAHAM

@BryanAGraham



Kim Clijsters's legacy, it seems, will be her niceness and popularity among her peers. That badly misses the point.

## SI COMMENTARY



### STEWART MANDEL ON ...

#### STANFORD

How much do the Cardinal miss not only Andrew Luck, but also All-America offensive linemen Jonathan Martin and David DeCastro? In the span of a year Stanford went from beating San Jose State 57-3 to merely scraping by with a 20-17 win against the Spartans last Friday night. One of the hallmarks of Luck's teams was their success on third down (57.6% in 2010, 52.6% in 2011). Against San Jose State, Stanford converted only 2 of 13 third downs.... Read more of Mandel's College Football Overtime at **SI.com**

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## SI DIGITAL BONUS

### PETER KING'S ONE MINUTE DRILL ►

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED senior writer Peter King takes a closer look at all 32 NFL teams in his latest video installment of the One-Minute Drill, analyzing the pros and cons for each franchise on the eve of the first weekend of the new season.





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Michael Rosenberg's story on Paralympic rowers Rob Jones and Oksana Masters was one of the most moving I have ever read. After the horrific treatment Masters received in an orphanage in Ukraine, the fact that she is alive and can function normally

is impressive enough—that she is excelling in her sport is absolutely remarkable. I am humbled by them both.

Scott Ross, Wexford, Pa.

## Ongoing Struggles

As a bilateral above-the-knee amputee for 18 years, I recognized myself in the struggles and triumphs of Jones and Masters (*The Marine and the Orphan*). I took exception, however, to the use of the term *phantom pain* in your story on these great Paralympians. Phantom pain is a very real physical sensation, often debilitating and searing in its intensity. To diminish its existence by using it as a metaphor does a disservice to amputees who strive daily to overcome their disability.

Patty Kolb, Carlsbad, Calif.

## Blast from the Past

The haunting cover shot of Mike Trout conjures up the robust menace of Hack Wilson and the serene intensity of Mel Ott. Trout's sinewy, gloveless hands are reminiscent of Honus Wagner and his jawline of Ty Cobb. THE SUPERNATURAL? A better billing would have been THE THROWBACK.

Jeffrey K. Tesch, Wyoming, Ohio

## New Day in State College

As a proud Penn State graduate who has dedicated three decades to the diplomatic work of the State Department, I found the title of your article on Penn State (*Present at the Re-creation*)—which harkens back to the title of Secretary of State Dean Acheson's Pulitzer Prize-winning memoir—to be personally and powerfully prophetic. Indeed, another of Acheson's astute formulations seems relevant to the Nittany Lions: "If we learn the art of yielding what must be yielded to the changing present, we can save the best of the past."

Dan Sheerin, College Park, Md.

## The Other Decision

I want to thank Phil Taylor for clearly highlighting the absurdity of the Nationals' decision to limit the number of innings Stephen

Strasburg pitches (POINT AFTER), and for outlining the alternative choices Washington could have made to preserve Strasburg's arm. If the Nats fail to reach the World Series, their decision on Strasburg will be debated from here to infinity.

Russ Haasch, Aurora, Ill.



## TRENDING



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## TWEET OF THE WEEK

"@PastorYPJ: Michigan looked like they were ranked No. 5 ... in Pop Warner. Yikes! I've seen better blocking on Twitter!"

(JUSTINTUCKNY691)

## FEEDBACK

### Maurice Jones-Drew

reported to Jaguars practice after a 38-day holdout, but without a new contract. Do you think the reigning rushing champ is the best back in the AFC, and is he deserving of a restructured deal?



**f Neal Elden:** I think Arian Foster and Ray Rice are better. MJD's effort may qualify as the dumbest because the holdout got him nothing. Or maybe he just didn't want to play in the preseason.

**f Jerry Long:** Not by a long shot. He's maybe the third- or fourth-best overall in the AFC.

**8 Mark Roehl:** I don't know about being the best, but he's certainly the most rested.

**8 Summer Fall:** He's definitely one of the best in his division, but not the entire conference. My question is, Will missing the preseason have an impact on MJD's performance during the regular season? Keeping my fingers crossed that it doesn't.

**f David Nastali:** Not in that weak Jaguars offense. Besides, I see an injury in his future.

**f Rene Martinez:** The best? Try the greediest. He is going to make \$4.45 million this year and \$4.95 million next year. He ended the holdout because he wanted to play this year. So what was the point?



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## AQUA RUSH

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## New Media, Medieval Hours

By TERRY McDONNELL

IAN OREFICE is a storm of energy. He grew up in Clifton Park, N.Y., playing golf, teaching golf and then playing professionally—which he quit Siena College to do—in mini-tours and generally barnstorming around the country. Much hilarity and good times ensued. Returning to school (“Hey, the plan was always to graduate, and then go back to golf”) at Providence, Ian founded the school’s first student-run TV station, picking up video journalism as naturally as he had a nine-iron when he was an 11-year-old. Next stop, CNN, doing several jobs (sometimes all at once) before sliding over to CNN/Money.com, where he was part of the launch team that created the site’s leading business digital video network. Then, looking for a bigger challenge, he arrived at SI in February 2010 charged with more or less inventing SI’s video network out of almost zero infrastructure. His first move was to find Maggie Gray. Also from upstate New York (Binghamton), Gray stood tall (which she is) from Day One on the job as a beacon of cool professionalism. If Ian throws ideas like sparks, Maggie catches them in perfectly matched sets. She had already covered sports on all levels, and she glided seamlessly into an improvised studio as SI’s first digital sports anchor, conducting interviews with the most influential names in sports about the top stories in the NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL, college football, college basketball, NASCAR, horse racing and Olympic sports (routinely all in the same day) on her *Inside Report*. As far as I can tell, the two of them work a couple of thousand hours a week as a kind of mind-meld thinking machine, a collaboration that plays as genuinely in their videos as it does in their work with colleagues.

Executive producer Orefice, Gray and senior producer Collin Orcutt spearhead a small but prodigiously agile staff. Orcutt, who also apparently works a couple of thousand hours a week, came to SI.com as an intern from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism and stuck—which is a bit like suggesting that Derek Jeter stuck with the Yankees. It’s all about the work, bringing the SPORTS ILLUSTRATED brand to life in video across all platforms (Web, mobile, tablet, broadcast), servicing SI, SI GOLF, SI KIDS and Swimsuit. What started as a few videos daily on SI.com now typically ranges from 18 to 25 million views per month. And that number jumps considerably during February, March and April because of the more than 100 videos produced for the SI Swimsuit franchise. The most recent narrative series created for SI.com and the digital editions of the magazine is *Underdogs*, 10 mini-documentaries profiling high school football programs across the United States that have overcome such obstacles as dilapidated facilities, crime-ridden communities, severe funding deficits and disasters, both personal and natural. (Go to [www.Facebook.com/SportsIllustrated](http://www.Facebook.com/SportsIllustrated) to tell us about an Underdog team in your community.) This is a series (sponsored by Powerade) that illustrates that the most inspiring sports stories don’t always come from the pros or big-budget college programs. Naturally, it’s one of Ian’s favorite ideas.



**CAPTAINS VIDEO**  
The tireless Orefice (top) and Gray are building an agile new online franchise at SPORTS ILLUSTRATED.

MEL LEVINE (MCDONNELL); ERIC W. RASCO (OREFICE); CARLOS M. SANDEGRO (GRAY)

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# SCORECARD



**I**f you close your eyes and picture an NFL game in your head, those pictures will likely arrive from a dozen familiar angles, framed by a television. Professional football—even in our daydreams now—is always mediated by network cameras.

Seventy-three years after NBC first put pro football on TV—the Brooklyn Dodgers beat the Philadelphia Eagles at Ebbets Field—NFL football is TV's most popular programming. Nine of the 10 highest-rated shows in 2011 were NFL games (or shows about the NFL), the Super Bowl is annually the most-viewed program in America, and the league provides the cast for three of the longest running series in history. (*NFL on CBS*, *NFL Films Presents* and *Monday Night Football* have each aired more or less continuously for 40 years and counting.) The only other genres to endure so long (mostly network news, soap operas and talk shows) have all long passed their peaks of popularity, while pro football's sell-by date is, at the very minimum, still a decade distant.

That's because the NFL

## Oh, Give Me My Home

With all the benefits to watching the NFL on television, there's little to gain from seeing the game in person anymore

BY STEVE RUSHIN

will get nearly \$28 billion in broadcast rights from 2014 through '22, an astonishing fee that might yet prove a bargain. On its first day of sale last week, *Madden NFL 13*—a

video game shot in the television idiom, designed to play on television screens—sold 900,000 copies. All of those buyers aren't pretending to play football. They're pre-

tending to play a highly stylized game we now *think of* as football, a crane-shot, cable-cammed, dish-miked spectacle: As Seen on TV.

The football most of us no longer recognize—if we ever recognized it at all—is the game viewed in person, the only lens between you and the action a pair of binoculars or beer goggles.

As TV ratings flourish, attendance at NFL games has decreased every year for the last four seasons. To be fair, the league set an attendance record in 2007, after which the nation's economy collapsed. But those four years have also seen the nesting home viewer become ever more entrenched, entitled, inert. NFL Sunday Ticket delivers every out-of-market league game to your couch, and the Red Zone Channel, which debuted on DirecTV in '05, screens every league play when an offense advances inside its opponent's 20-yard line. From his leather recliner, the stay-at-home spectator can summon highlights with a swipe of his tablet, update his fantasy team at a keystroke, relieve (and refill) his bladder with minimal effort or expense.



## SIGN OF THE APOCALYPSE



*A bottle of water supposedly taken from an ice bath in which double Olympic gold medalist Mo Farah of Great Britain soaked during the London Games is for sale on eBay with a minimum bid of \$1,000.*

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell is eminently aware of all this. "We have made the point repeatedly that the experience at home is outstanding," he said at the owners' meeting in May. "And we have to compete with that in some fashion by making sure we create the same kind of environment in our stadiums and use the same kind of technology."

That technology will be difficult to replicate, as it includes high-def and 3-D, first-down lines superimposed on the field and super-slow-motion replays. When NBC aired that first game from Brooklyn on Oct. 22, 1939, the network fed pictures to 500 local set owners with two cameras, 38 fewer

than it used to broadcast last February's Super Bowl to an audience of 111 million.

The two teams in that game, the Giants and the Patriots, had already played each other in Week 9 of last season, in Foxborough. I watched that game from a corner-of-the-end-zone seat at Gillette Stadium, my view impeded by the guy in front of me, who stood impassively for much of the game, scarecrow-style. Men in OCHO CINCO jerseys got Ocho-stinko on \$8 beers. Even the sober among us were occasionally unable to follow the game action and looked for guidance to the down-and-distance readings on the scoreboard. It was like following the progress of a

baseball game via ticker tape circa 1922. On disputed plays the most desperate phoned home from their seats to ask what was going on.

But the NFL needs this studio audience to provide the home viewer with ambient sound—a sitcom-laugh track of roars and boos—and to serve as human set dressing: 60,000 seat-fillers. Unless enough people pay handsomely for the privilege of attending, the rest of us are punished by the frightening specter of TV blackouts.

For that reason, especially, and that reason only, we commend to you and all your friends the benefits of live attendance. Tailgating is still better in a parking lot than in

a driveway. The stadium men's room line continues to serve as a roundtable of scintillating banter. It remains prohibitively expensive to organize a pregame Navy flyover of your living room.

And there are still other amenities that the NFL has introduced, or hopes to have in place soon. The league is working on free Wi-Fi in every stadium. Fans of the Colts and the Pats will have access to the league's RedZone channel via apps designed to work in-seat. The Panthers' app promises replays from several camera angles. It's all being done in the vain hope that being at a game can be made to feel as lifelike—as vivid, nuanced and authentic—as not being there at all. □

## HOT NOT

### IN THE HUNT

The Angels (71-63) won't catch Texas, but they won five straight last week and sit just 3½ games out of a playoff spot. Rightfielder Torii Hunter isn't done yet either: The 37-year-old had his fourth straight three-hit game last Saturday, becoming just the fifth player his age or older to do so since 1900.

### NADAL'S FALL

Absent from the Olympics and from this week's U.S. Open, Rafael Nadal will be out at least two more months after announcing on Monday that he has a partially torn patella tendon in his left knee. Said the 11-time Grand Slam winner, "I have many years in front of me."

### BIG & RICH

Led by Oklahoma State's 84-0 walloping of Savannah State, the Big 12 went 9-0 this weekend (TCU was off) and stands as the only undefeated AQ conference. Even better: The conference is reportedly close to signing a deal with ESPN and Fox Sports worth \$2.6 billion over 13 years.

### OUT-OF-BOUNDS

Luke Donald's frustrating weekend (tied for 24th through three rounds) at the Deutsche Bank Championship spilled over onto—what else?—Twitter when he used a derogatory term to refer to TPC Boston course architect Gil Hanse after a bogey last Saturday on 18; Donald later apologized.

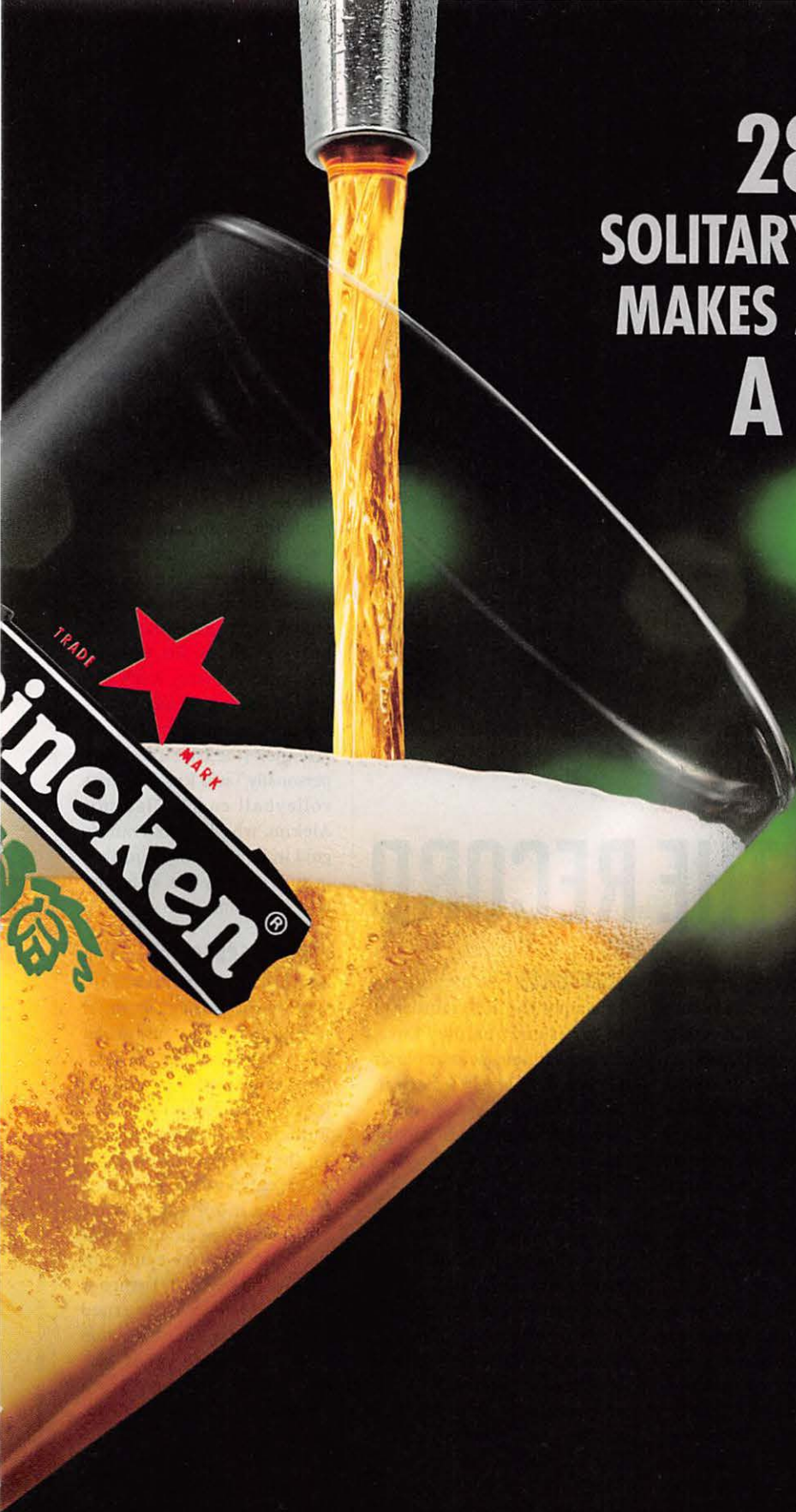
### CHEER THE O'S

How can you not admire Baltimore? Losers for 14 straight years, the Orioles (75-59) have won eight of 10 and are one back of the Yanks in the East. This with 40% of the Bombers' payroll. And high fives all around for Adam Jones (signed in May through 2018) and his career year—26 HRs, .829 OPS.





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## GO FIGURE

736

Passing yards by Division III Eureka (Ill.) College quarterback Sam Durley in a 62–55 win over rival Knox College last Saturday, an NCAA record.

900

Attendance at the game, which was played at Knox's Knosher Bowl (capacity: 6,000) in Galesburg, Ill.

14

Age of Tennessee middle school student Kamron Doyle, who finished third at the PBA South Scorpion Open. He's the youngest bowler ever to crack the top three at a PBA event.

116

Errorless games this year, through Sunday, for Cubs second baseman Darwin Barney, who broke the NL's single-season record on Aug. 29 after an error charged to him in the seventh inning was given instead to third baseman Luis Valbuena.

31

Goals allowed by financially troubled second-division Romanian soccer team CS Buftea in a shutout loss to third-tier ACS Berceni in a national cup match. Buftea, which fielded a side of mostly under-19 players, trailed 12–0 at the end of the first half.



### THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS

## FOR THE RECORD

**| DIED |** At age 71 of undetermined causes, former Duke basketball star Art Heyman. A fiery 6' 5" swingman from Oceanside, N.Y., he originally committed to North Carolina and became a central figure in the rivalry between the Blue Devils and the Tar Heels. In his three varsity seasons, he averaged 25.1 points and 10.9 rebounds. As a senior captain in 1962–63, Heyman (*above*) earned NCAA player of the year honors and led Duke to its first Final Four appearance. "As much as any other human being, Art was responsible for Duke University becoming a national power in college basketball," said Vic Bubas, Heyman's coach with the Blue Devils, in a statement. The Knicks took Heyman with the first pick of the '63 draft, and he spent three years in the NBA and three more in the ABA.

**| SENTENCED |** To 23 years in prison for the 2010 murder of ex-girlfriend Yeardley Love, former Virginia lacrosse player George W. Huguey V. Early in the morning of May 3, an intoxicated Huguey kicked in the apartment door of Love, 22, a standout player for the Cavaliers' women's lacrosse team, and beat her to death. The case brought national attention to the issues of domestic violence and alcohol abuse. State law requires that Huguey, 24, who was convicted of second-degree murder and larceny last February, and who has already served two years in jail, must finish at least 85% of his sentence—about 17½ more years.

**| DIED |** At age 43, Russian women's volleyball coach Ser-

gei Ovchinnikov. Police have not released details of his death, but media in Croatia, where the Russian team was training, have reported that he hanged himself in his hotel room in the Adriatic port city of Porec, apparently distraught over Russia's fifth-place Olympic finish. Ovchinnikov took over the team on an interim basis last November and was named the full-time coach a month later. He came under heavy criticism for Russia's Olympic failure, with the press harping on his lack of top-level coaching experience. "He took [the Olympics] very personally," said Russian men's volleyball coach Vladimir Alekno, who led his team to gold in London. Ovchinnikov is survived by his wife and two children.

**| TRANSFERRED |** From Fulham F.C. to Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premier League, American midfielder Clint Dempsey. The 29-year-old sniper, who scored 50 league goals in six years with Fulham, had refused to play for the club in anticipation of an expected transfer to Liverpool, but negotiations broke down when an agreement on an offer could not be reached. Dempsey (*below*) also turned down a move to Aston Villa. He signed with Spurs for three years and a reported \$9.5 million.

**| SHAVED |** By more than an hour, the time of vice-presidential hopeful Paul Ryan in the 1990 Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minn., by the candidate himself. In a radio interview on Aug. 23 with conser-





**ANNOUNCED** That he would retire after the U.S. Open, Andy Roddick, 30. A veteran of more than 800 singles matches who had battled injuries over the past few years, Roddick, ranked No. 22, made the surprise announcement last Thursday, saying, "I just feel like it's time." He then won his first three matches to delay that time for at least a few more days. Whenever A-Rod tosses his final racket, there's plenty we'll miss about the best American player of his era, including...



**His talent:**  
32 titles, including  
2003 U.S. Open



**That monster  
serve**



**His sardonic wit:**  
"If nothing else, I'm  
a decent quote."



**His better half**

vative host Hugh Hewitt, Ryan gave his best marathon time as, "Under three, high twos. I had a two hour and fifty-something." Running journalists and aficionados investigated—breaking three hours in a marathon is no small feat, and most runners know their personal records to the second—and the inquiry soon forced a spokesman for Ryan's campaign to admit that the candidate had run just one marathon, when he was 20, and that his finishing time was 4:01:25. Ryan isn't the first politician to mess with the marathon: When Massachusetts senator John Kerry ran for president in 2004, he claimed to have run the Boston Marathon, but he declined to provide any details when journalists were unable to find his name on lists of finishers.



Tanard Jackson. Since being selected by the Buccaneers in the fourth round out of Syracuse in 2007, Jackson, 27, has struggled with drug problems. He missed four games in '09, 14 in '10 and six last season. Tampa Bay released him in April after he failed a physical. This is his third suspension. Jackson, who has not commented, appealed the test result last week, but was denied. He becomes eligible for reinstatement on Aug. 31, 2013.

**| PLAYED** | The last 1:40 of South Plantation (Fla.) High's 31-14 victory over Nova High last Friday, by quarterback Erin DiMeglio, the first girl in state history to play the position in a regular-season varsity game. The 5' 5", 140-pound senior—the Paladin's third-string passer—handed off twice to running back Daniel Dayes to run out the clock on the victory. "It was a great feeling," DiMeglio (above) said, but added, "I wanted to throw a pass."

**| SUSPENDED** | Indefinitely for violating the NFL's substance-abuse policy, Redskins safety



## MLB PLAYERS POLL

# Who is the most underrated manager in baseball?

◆ JOE MADDON, RAYS .....	22%
KIRK GIBSON, DIAMONDBACKS .....	9%
BUD BLACK, PADRES .....	7%
BRUCE BOCHY, GIANTS .....	6%
RON GARDENHIRE, TWINS .....	6%

**FAST FACTS** With 5% of the vote, the Rangers' Ron Washington finished sixth—the same ranking he received in answer to the question, Who is the most *overrated* manager in baseball? (Ozzie Guillen of the Marlins was No. 1.) ... Of Maddon's 60 votes, 39 of came from within the American League. In a similar poll on Facebook, SI readers also picked Maddon, who got 30% of their votes.

BASED ON THE RESPONSES OF 271 MLB PLAYERS TO SI'S SURVEY

## NHL

# The Air Over There

One year on from a Russian jet crash, players face the prospect of returning to the KHL



**O**n Friday hockey fans will march in silence through the streets of Yaroslavl, Russia, in memory of the plane crash a year ago that killed every member of the Lokomotiv hockey team (above). The tragedy crossed borders, as 37 players and coaches from 10 countries died that day, including NHL alumni Pavol Demitra, Ruslan Salei and Brad McCrimmon, the team's coach.

One day before the fan memorial, Lokomotiv Yaroslavl will play its first game of the Kontinental Hockey League season. The team is coached by Tom Rowe, a former Hurricanes assistant, and reportedly includes a handful of former NHL players.

The opening of the NHL's own season is far from certain. The league's contract with its players is set to expire on Sept. 15, and neither side seems able to agree on how to divide revenue. Talks between the league and the players' association ended in a stalemate last week. "We both agreed that when either of us has something to say, we'll pick up the phone," NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said of union head Donald Fehr.

With another work stoppage looming—the NHL lost the entire 2004–05 season to a lockout—players may once again turn their eyes across the Atlantic. Eight years ago many players joined European leagues, including the cash-rich KHL. Considering the Russian airline industry's checkered past, however, some in the NHL said they did not feel safe when flying in the country.

Penguins center Evgeni Malkin, who played for Metallurg Magnitogorsk from 2003 to '06, has said he would return to the KHL club in the event of a canceled season. He speculated last week that teammate Sidney Crosby would also consider playing abroad.

But Malkin concedes that "North American players won't go to Europe until the very last moment. ... A lot of them are a bit afraid of Russia. But the best hockey league in the world after the NHL is here."

—Sarah Kwak



## THEY SAID IT

**"When your own house is threatened, you stand at the door in your boxer shorts and with a pitchfork in hand to defend it."**

**ROBERT HARTING** Germany's Olympic discus champion, on how important it was for him to win at Sunday's international track and field meet in his hometown of Berlin.



## BASEBALL

# AN AT BAT AT LAST?

**A player bids to come back from a beaming**



## SOCCER

# For Fun and Country

**A boisterous, brave and well-traveled fan club keeps the flag flying for the men's national team**

**W**hen the U.S. meets Jamaica in a World Cup qualifier this Friday in Kingston, its players won't be the only ones in ramshackle National Stadium wearing the stars and stripes. More than 50 members of the American Outlaws, the national team's most popular fan group, will be there on a three-day tour package that will take them to the game and to an all-inclusive resort across the island in Montego Bay. The Outlaws, known for their rollicking songs, raucous pregame parties and U.S. flag bandannas they wear over their faces, have become as much a fixture at U.S. games as the thumping reggae and the cloud of ganja smoke are at National Stadium. They've grown to 6,500 dues-paying members in more than 70 chapters across the country.

The U.S.'s World Cup qualifying region includes the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico, places where rooting for Uncle Sam is equal parts *Rough Guide* and Graham Greene novel. "I can't imagine there's anywhere in America where you get escorted into the stadium and there's riot police with dogs and barbed wire around your section," says Korey Donahoo, a 30-year-old civil engineer from Lincoln, Neb., and the president and cofounder of the American Outlaws. While the welcome is warmer in Caribbean outposts such as Antigua and Barbuda (site of an October away qualifier) and Jamaica, the menace in other spots is palpable. Last month, when the U.S. defeated Mexico for the first time in 25 tries at Mexico City's Estadio Azteca, the small cohort of Yank supporters

had to be evacuated by police to escape a hail of projectiles from angry fans of *El Tricolor*.

The Outlaws have grown steadily since their formation in 2007, in large part because they don't skip any moment involving the U.S. men's team. Members travel in large numbers to U.S. cities for every home match—next stop: Columbus, Ohio, on Sept. 11—hosting giant fiestas the night before and resuming the revelry with game-day tailgates. "There's a following of people that you always see," says Luis Arguero, a San Francisco-based fan who's been to games all over the U.S. and in Germany, South Africa, Switzerland and Venezuela. "There's a sense of adventure, a sense of pride. Traveling and soccer are two of my passions, so I kill two birds with one stone."

U.S. fans will be at every stop of World Cup qualifying through the end of next year, followed by the holy grail of World Cup 2014 in Brazil (provided the U.S. qualifies). The American Outlaws have already sold more than 500 packages, at a cost of \$5,000 each, that include charter flights to U.S. game sites in Brazil, hotel accommodations and transportation for at least two weeks. "We'll be like a small town of fans in Brazil," says Donahoo, who has been saving steadily for the trip. Before they can drink all the Brahma in Brazil, though, there will be plenty of Red Stripe in Jamaica and Carib in Antigua and Modelo in Mexico. When you're an obsessive follower of the U.S. national team, the trail never really ends. That's the beauty of it. —Grant Wahl

Outfielder Adam Greenberg's first major league plate appearance ended his career. A ninth-round pick out of North Carolina in 2002, he was called up by the Cubs from Double A in July '05 and debuted as a pinch hitter in the ninth inning of an 8–2 victory over the Marlins. When he stepped in to face lefty Valerio De Los Santos, the lefthanded-hitting Greenberg noted that the defense was playing him to hit the other way. Then he took a 92-mph fastball off the back of his skull.

For more than a year Greenberg battled blurred vision and vertigo. He spent the next six seasons bouncing around the minors, finishing his career in 2011 with the independent Bridgeport (Conn.) Bluefish. He still hopes to make a comeback.

One Cubs fan is trying to give him a boost. Matt Liston, a coproducer of the ESPN 30 for 30 documentary about star-crossed Chicago fan Steve Bartman, has launched the One At Bat campaign in an attempt to give Greenberg, 31, another chance at his first major league hit—or even his first out. Liston's change.org petition for One At Bat has more than 12,000 signatures.

Greenberg understands that any team that gives him an at bat would likely be doing it for the publicity, but he'll take it any way it comes. "I just want to get in the door," Greenberg says. "Everyone needs that chance." —Stephanie Apstein







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**STANDING TALL** The statue honoring 42-year Brewers radio announcer Bob Uecker that was dedicated at Miller Park last Friday is almost as deadpan as the man himself. Uecker, 77, is well-known for making fun of his major league struggles: He hit just .200 in six seasons with three franchises from 1962 to '67—when asked about the home run he hit off Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax, the former catcher says, "I apologize to him every time I see him." The larger-than-life-sized bronze sculpture depicts Uecker in a sweater vest and a pair of slacks, with his hands in his pockets. Uecker would no doubt appreciate one tweeter's observation about the pose: "It looks like he's watching a statue being unveiled."



**SURFING**

## When the Shark Bites

An Aussie surfing star rides to the rescue during a vicious attack

Even before last week, Geoff (Camel) Goulden had earned a reputation in Western Australia's surfing community as a daring big-wave rider. But by helping save a shark-attack victim in remote coastal waters last week, the 40-year-old Goulden (*below*) added immeasurably to his legend.

On Aug. 28, Jon Hines, 34,



a vacationing civil engineer from New South Wales, was plying the waves off scenic Red Bluff, some 550 miles north of Perth, when he was bitten in the abdomen by a shark of unknown species. Witnesses say Hines did plenty to save himself, punching the shark's nose before it bit him a second time on his right arm. With blood in the water and the predator presumably still in the vicinity, Goulden swam to Hines, told him to grab hold of his leg rope and paddled them both to shore. From there beachgoers drove a still-conscious Hines for an hour and a half over unpaved roads before he could be transferred to an ambulance and taken to the nearest hospital. Hines, the sixth victim and first survivor of a Western Australia shark attack in the past 10 months, was said to be in stable condition after surgery. As local surfing foundation president Gene Hardy told Australia's *Seven News*, "If you need someone to paddle you away from a shark, Camel is it." —Dan Greene

# FACES IN THE CROWD

## COACHES EDITION

→ Edited by ALEXANDRA FENWICK



### KATHY JENKINS

ALEXANDRIA, VA. > LACROSSE

Jenkins, 61, who coaches at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, became the second girls' coach—high school or college—to reach 600 career wins, with a 15–2 victory over Holy Child last season. Never a player herself, she founded the girls' program in 1976 and has led the Saints to eight undefeated seasons and seven Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Division I state titles, including this year's (15–4 over Bishop Ireton). Jenkins finished the season with 608 wins.



### MIKE SIMONS

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP, N.J. > ROWING

Simons, 28, an assistant coach at Cedar Creek High (Egg Harbor City), returned just two weeks after being injured in a motorcycle accident and having his right leg amputated above the knee. Six weeks later he led the first-year Pirates program to first in girls' sculls and third in girls' doubles and novice four at the Atlantic County championships. A former Army Ranger, Simons was given straws by his rowers while he was hospitalized in recognition of his coaching mantra: Get a straw (and suck it up).



### MARCIA PINDER

FORT LAUDERDALE > BASKETBALL

Pinder, 61, who surpassed 800 victories and led the Dillard High girls' team to its third straight Class 5A state title this year, was named the Women's Basketball Coaches Association national high school coach of the year. She became Florida's all-time winningest coach last year, for boys and girls, and has led the Panthers to seven state championships in her 36-year career. Pinder was inducted into the Florida Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame this summer.



### STEVE KUSTER

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS. > SWIMMING

Kuster, 42, a 13-year coach at Williams College, was named the national women's coach of the year for the third straight time at the Division III championships. He guided the Ephs to meet records in two relays and in three of seven individual wins for a second-place finish. Williams' men's and women's teams each won the NESCAC title, giving Kuster a combined 24 conference crowns. He still holds the 200-fly record at Penn, from which he graduated in 1993.



### STELLA SAMPRAS WEBSTER

EL SEGUNDO, CALIF. > TENNIS

Sampras Webster, 43, a 16-year coach at UCLA, guided the Bruins to their first Intercollegiate Tennis Association national indoor title with a 4–0 defeat over top-seeded Duke and was named the ITA Division I women's coach of the year. Her squad also held the No. 1 ranking for a school-record eight straight weeks and ended Stanford's 157-match home winning streak. Pete Sampras's older sister, she was a four-time All America at UCLA and coached the team to its first NCAA championship, in 2008.



### CHRIS PUCKETT | CAMERON SHELLEY SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF. > BASEBALL

When no other coach volunteered, Chris, 15, and Cameron, 14, took over a Little League junior division team of 12- to 14-year-olds (with Chris's dad, Gary, as team administrator), then led San Clemente American No. 2 to a district championship with a 10–9 victory over Viejo USC. As freshmen at San Clemente High this spring, the duo also helped the Tritons' freshman-sophomore team win its league title. Chris was named team MVP.

→ **Nominate Now**

To submit a candidate for Faces in the Crowd, go to [SI.com/faces](http://SI.com/faces). For more on outstanding amateur athletes, follow @SI\_Faces on Twitter.

SCOTT PAULUS/MILWAUKEE BREWERS (UECKER); GARY PORTER/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL (AP) (STATUE); YASHA HETZEL (GOULDEN); COURTESY OF ST. STEPHEN'S & ST. AGNES SCHOOL (JENKINS); DAVE NOBELL (SIMONS); COURTESY OF CAREY WAGNER/SUN-SENTINEL (PINDER); KRIS DUFOUR/WILLIAMS COLLEGE (KUSTER); DON LIEBIG/ASUCIA (SAMPRAS WEBSTER); GARY PUCKETT (PUCKETT, SHELLEY)





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*"I try to have a conversation with him every day. I try to get a feel for where his mood is every day. You just have to make him feel wanted."*

RON WASHINGTON, Texas Rangers manager, on his relationship with outfielder Josh Hamilton

## GUEST SHOTS SAY WHAT?



Former  
Buckeye  
**Eddie George**  
weighed  
in on Allen

Pinkett's suggestion that Notre Dame should have a couple of "criminals" on the roster to give the program more of an edge, a practice the Irish radio analyst said was common at Ohio State. "Criminal is not the word that I would use," George said. "I haven't played with criminals. We did have edge guys—in terms of, I would go to war with this guy." ...



Dodgers G.M.  
**Ned Colletti**  
talked about  
the new  
ownership

group's approach to making trades. "They are huge-picture people," Colletti told me. "They're not just looking at who's going to hit fourth in the Dodgers' lineup." ... Wisconsin coach **Bret**



**Bielema** isn't  
worried that  
running back  
Montee Ball  
will suffer any

lingering effects from his assault by a group of men in Madison on Aug. 1. "Any time football has been taken away from [Ball], he's come back with a vengeance," Bielema said. ... **Robin**



**Ventura**,  
who's led  
the White  
Sox to the AL  
Central lead

in his first year as an MLB skipper, reminded me that he did have previous managing experience—in Little League: "Little League prepares you for the pitch count. I was all over it. I was good. I can count that high."



## DAN PATRICK: THE INTERVIEW

# JUST MY TYPE

**DAN PATRICK:** *How tall are you?*

**RUSSELL WILSON:** Right under 5' 11". Weighing in at a full 210 pounds.

**DP:** *So you're under 5' 11"?*

**RW:** That's what people say, but I don't believe 'em.

**DP:** *How many times did you hear, We love everything about you, but you're not tall enough?*

**RW:** Quite often. But I wasn't going to let that discourage me. The Seattle Seahawks went against the grain and drafted me. I'm just going to keep running with the opportunity.

**DP:** *How surprised are you that you're the starting quarterback?*

**RW:** I'm not surprised at all. I've done everything I can to be the best that I can possibly be.

**DP:** *How's the relationship with fellow Seahawks quarterback Matt Flynn?*

**RW:** It's a good relationship. We're working for one goal and that's to win. We're very, very competitive in the sense that we just want to win every game that we play.

**DP:** *What was the scene like when you found out you were the starter?*

**RW:** Coach [Pete] Carroll was dribbling a basketball. I go up and talk to him; he gives me a hug and says, "You know, Russell, you've done a great job. You've come here, been a leader, you've done everything you can in terms of preparing the right way. And you've competed at a very, very high level, and

I just want to let you know that you're the starting quarterback of the Seattle Seahawks." I was fired up. Everybody said I was too short or I couldn't play in the National Football League. The fact that I put in all this hard work and all the things I've gone through in the past. ... It's a dream come true.

**DP:** *At any point while he's telling you that stuff, did you think he was going to end with Flynn as the starter?*

## SEATTLE'S BEST RUSSELL WILSON

The third-round pick from Wisconsin won the Seahawks' starting QB job by completing 63.5% of his passes and throwing five TDs and just one interception in the preseason.



**RW:** I wasn't really worried about it either way. I knew at some point I'd get the chance to play. I knew that I was ready to start.

**DP:** *How did it go down when you told your wife you were starting?*

**RW:** I pretty much slow-played it on her. I acted normal.

**DP:** *What did you say to her?*

**RW:** "Hey, I didn't know what you were up to, but I'm just calling to let you know that I'm the starting quarterback for the Seattle Seahawks."

**DP:** *How much grief do you give her for her over-the-top reaction on draft day?*

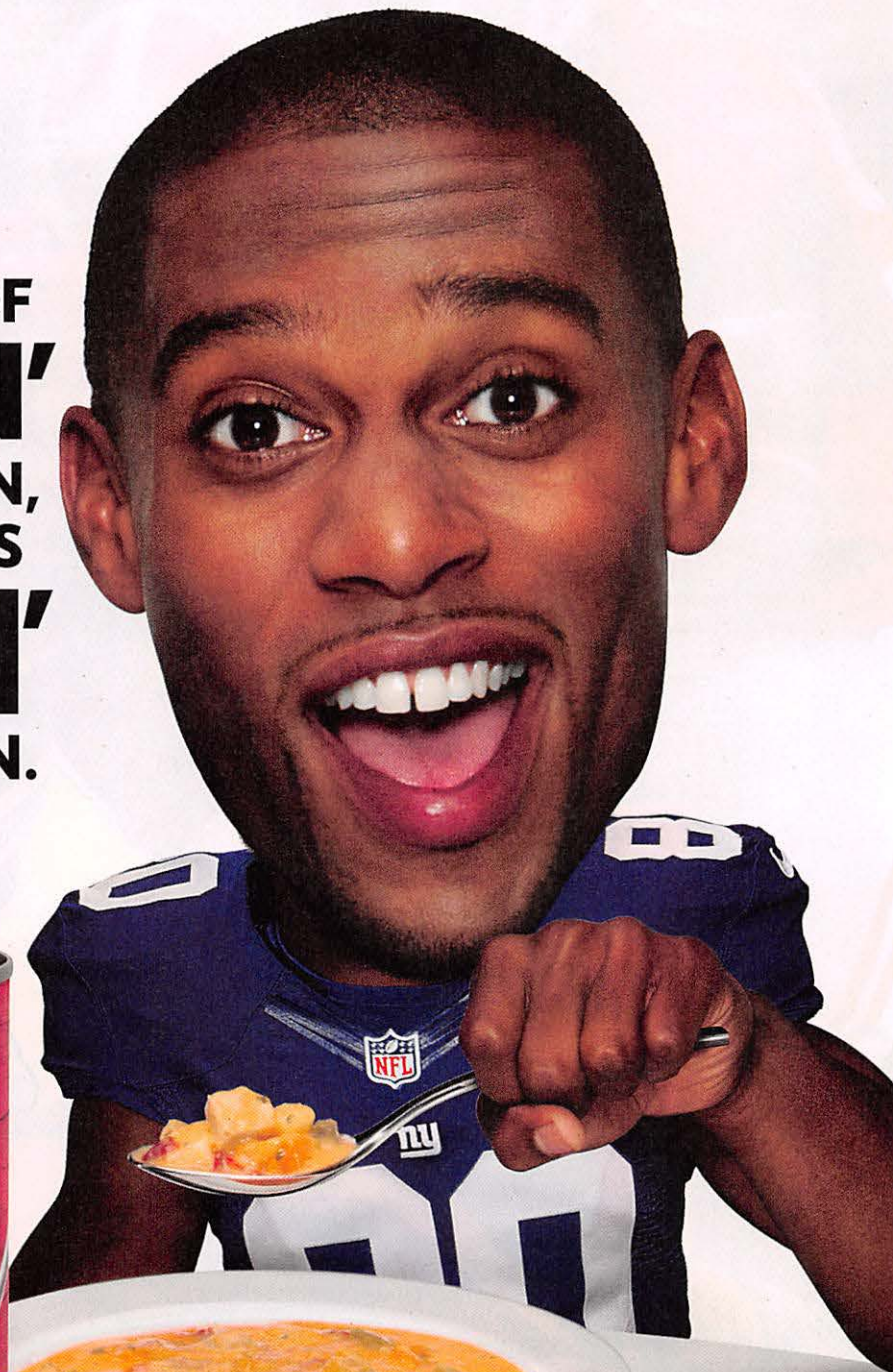
**RW:** She was excited. She was glad we were going to Seattle. The crazy thing, we were at [the] IMG [agency] about a month before the combine, and we put all the teams in a hat. I said, You know, I'm going to shake all the teams up and pull a team out just for fun. Sure enough, Seattle Seahawks. How crazy is that?

**DP:** *When you get introduced for the game, are you going to be referred to as a former North Carolina State or Wisconsin player?*

**RW:** I need someone to tweet me some ideas. I've thought of WolfBadger and different things. □



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**DAZED AND BLUE**  
Vincent Smith and Michigan didn't do squat in their opener against the defending champs, but it still made for better TV than almost every other game.

Photograph by  
**AL TIELEMANS**

# INSIDE

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Cupcake Wars

Get fat on the Savannah States all you want, but in the new BCS you might want a few more Cowboy Classics on your résumé

BY ANDY STAPLES

**I**n these days of carb counting and fad diets, it's time to change the menu for college football's opening weeks. Far too many programs remain hopelessly addicted to cupcakes, playing empty-calorie games against directional schools and FCS foes that don't help their teams on the field and don't excite their fans in the bleachers. Fortunately, the four-team playoff scheduled to take effect after the 2014 season might finally provide the incentive for schools to pack more protein into their schedules.

Strength of schedule will be a key consideration for the playoff selection committee, and all other things being equal, a team that faces tougher opponents should get the nod over a team that feasts on lightweights. At least that's how it's supposed to work. If it does, it might beef up an opening-week schedule that once again failed to inspire.

Of the 78 scheduled opening-weekend games, only two (Alabama-Michigan and Boise State-Michigan State) matched teams ranked in the

AP Top 25. Only eight games matched teams from BCS automatic-qualifying conferences. Most top programs preyed on lesser competition (see Oklahoma State 84, Savannah State 0), while a few were humiliated by lesser competition (see Youngstown State 31, Pitt 17).

In the meantime neutral-site games between power-conference teams have created compelling competition. Some event organizers can draw big-name teams by nearly matching the financial take from a home game. Chick-fil-A Bowl president Gary Stokan, whose Atlanta Sports Council paired up Tennessee and North Carolina State last Friday at the Georgia Dome and then hosted Auburn-Clemson on Saturday, says each set of Tigers will pocket between \$2.3 million and \$2.4 million from Saturday's game. In an age when healthy programs gross between \$3 million and \$4 million for a home game and must spend between \$600,000 and \$1 million to play a sacrificial lamb, losing a few hundred thousand on the net take is an acceptable trade off for the prestige and



## POWER RANKINGS

**1 ALABAMA**  
Crimson Tide proved it didn't just bask in the glow of their national title this off-season.



**2 LSU**  
Offense looked potent with QB Zach Mettenberger at the helm, but it was North Texas.



**3 USC**  
Matt Barkley-to-Margise Lee combo is as dangerous as expected.



**4 OREGON**  
RB DeAnthony Thomas had seven touches for 119 yards and three touchdowns. Yikes.



**5 MICHIGAN STATE**  
RB Le'Veon Bell had 50 touches and got stronger as the game went on.



**6 ARKANSAS**  
Hogs will be tested by Alabama on Sept. 15.



**7 WEST VIRGINIA**  
When the Mountaineers play, take the over. Followed 70 in Orange Bowl with 69 against Marshall.



**8 FLORIDA STATE**  
Seminole's dilemma? Don't get bored before Clemson visits on Sept. 22.



**9 SOUTH CAROLINA**  
Gamecocks looked sloppy, but RB Marcus Lattimore is back playing at 100%.



**10 OKLAHOMA**  
Sputtering offense gets one more warmup before Big 12 play.



recruiting bump provided by appearing on national television against a challenging opponent.

Plus, some coaches believe scheduling a high-profile team out of the gate improves the quality of off-season workouts. For a program that is expected to compete for a national title, facing another ranked team at the front of the schedule creates more urgency than playing an FCS foe would. "It's great for the off-season program for the development of your team," Alabama coach Nick Saban said before his team beat Michigan 41-14 in Arlington, Texas. "It really gives the players something to look forward to in the first game, and it gives the fans a lot to look forward to in the first game."

Meanwhile, the on-campus blockbuster isn't dead yet, thanks to administrators such as Michigan State athletic director Mark Hollis. To get Boise State to play at Spartan Stadium last Friday, Michigan State paid the Broncos \$1.2 million and agreed to a home-and-home series in 2022-23. Hollis isn't afraid of competition—he has scheduled home-and-home series with Oregon and Alabama over the next few years—but he understands why some of his counterparts are reluctant to agree to similar matchups. "There's no incentive to schedule hard," says Hollis, whose



**NOT IMPRESSED**  
The Cowboys hung 84 on the Tigers, but they won't score any points with the voters in the future with routs against similar competition.

elite basketball program routinely loads up on tough out-of-conference opponents and uses that experience to its advantage in March. "There's no carrot like there is with the NCAA basketball tournament," he says.

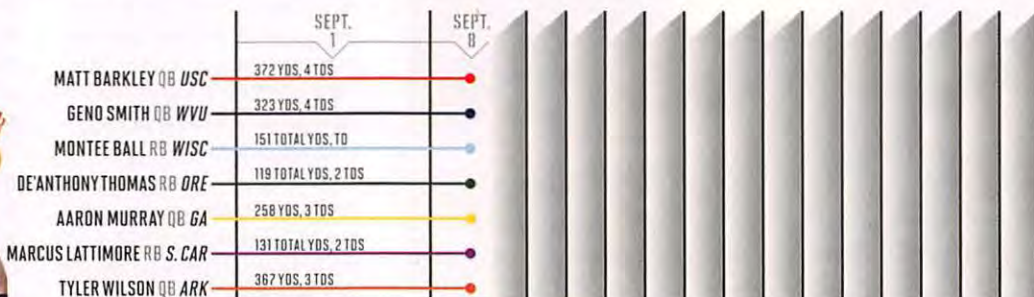
That should change if commissioners stay true to their word about a meaningful strength-of-schedule discussion during selection committee deliberations. The first time a school gets left out of the playoff because of a watered-down schedule, Stokan's group and the one led by Cowboys owner Jerry Jones, which hosted LSU-Oregon last year and Alabama-Michigan this year, will field phone calls from athletic

directors eager to play up instead of down. "As we move more toward the differentiation criteria of who gets into the Final Four, strength of schedule is coming back into play," Stokan says. "It gives us an opportunity for a coach and an AD to say, 'If we can make a run, we need to play in a game like this.' That's how we're going to market it."


For years, those who opposed a college football playoff worried that it would devalue the regular season. Instead, the playoff may make the regular season better on the front end by reducing the unsatisfying bloat caused by too many cupcakes. □

## HEISMAN TRACKER

The horses are out of the gate, and Matt Barkley's 372 yards and four TDs put him at the top of a tight field that includes Geno Smith, who ran for 65 yards and a TD in addition to his impressive throwing performance. SI will track the top candidates as they jockey for position throughout the season.







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NASCAR

# Chasing Glory

Handicapping NASCAR's postseason contenders

BY LARS ANDERSON

**W**ith one race remaining in the Sprint Cup regular season, 10 of the 12 drivers who will advance to NASCAR's playoff have locked up spots, and Kasey Kahne looks all but certain to take one of the two wild cards, which go to the drivers in positions 11–20 with the most wins. (Kahne is the only one with two.) Heading into Saturday's race at Richmond International Raceway, five drivers with one victory are in a simple situation: win and they're (almost definitely) in.



12<sup>th</sup> **KYLE BUSCH**

746 points

Busch has more career victories at Richmond (four) than at any other track besides Bristol (another short track), and he won at RIR in March 2011. He has another advantage: If no wild-carder gets a second win, the Chase spot goes to the driver with the most points. For now, that's Busch.

ODDS: 2-1

13<sup>th</sup> **JEFF GORDON**

734 points

Gordon lost his best Chase chance on Sunday in Atlanta, when he couldn't pull off a last-lap pass of leader Denny Hamlin. Now he'll need to come up big at a track where he's won just two of 39 starts, his third-worst winning percentage at a track where he's made at least 15 starts.

ODDS: 3-1

16<sup>th</sup> **MARCOS AMBROSE**

706 points

Like the drivers below him, Ambrose can only make the Chase by finding his way to Victory Lane. The Aussie, who won in August on the road course at Watkins Glen International, is a specialist on tracks that feature both left and right turns. Unfortunately for him, Richmond is a .75-mile oval.

ODDS: 30-1

17<sup>th</sup> **RYAN NEWMAN**

697 points

Of all the Chase long shots, Newman has the best chance to sneak in. Six of his 16 career wins have come on short tracks that have characteristics similar to Richmond's. One thing working against Newman: His last season with more than one win was 2004.

ODDS: 10-1

18<sup>th</sup> **JOEY LOGANO**

664 points

In 136 career starts in the Sprint Cup series, the 22-year-old Logano has only two wins. Could he surprise on Saturday night and make it three? Uh, no. In seven career starts at RIR, he has one top 10, and in his last two tries he has an average finish of 29.5. Maybe next year.

ODDS: 25-1

## OTHER SCENARIOS

Winless drivers Carl Edwards (14th) and Paul Menard (15th) could sneak in by taking the checkered flag at RIR, but they would also have to pass every one-win driver ahead of them in the standings. However, if 10th-place Tony Stewart (three wins) totally tanks at RIR, he'd take the second wild card, and whichever driver replaced him in the top 10 would make the Chase regardless of who wins on Saturday.

ODDS: LOOOOONG

MLB

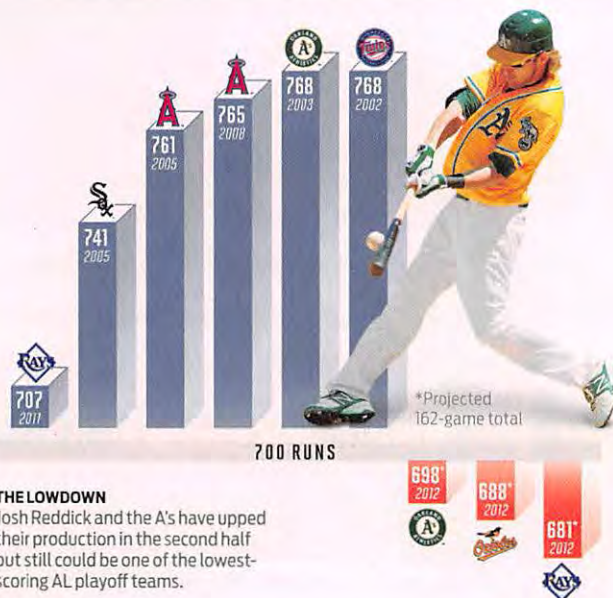
# The New Efficiency

The tight budgets of three leading wild-card contenders extend beyond their payrolls to their skimpy run production

BY JOE SHEEHAN

**S**ince the wild card was introduced in 1995, no American League team has made the post-season without scoring more than 700 runs during the regular season. That could change this year. If the season had ended on Sunday, the AL wild cards would

have been won by the A's and the Orioles—two teams on sub-700 scoring paces. A third such team, the Rays, was only 1½ games behind Baltimore for the last spot. Here are the lowest-scoring AL playoff teams in the three-division era and how this year's run-hungry contenders compare.





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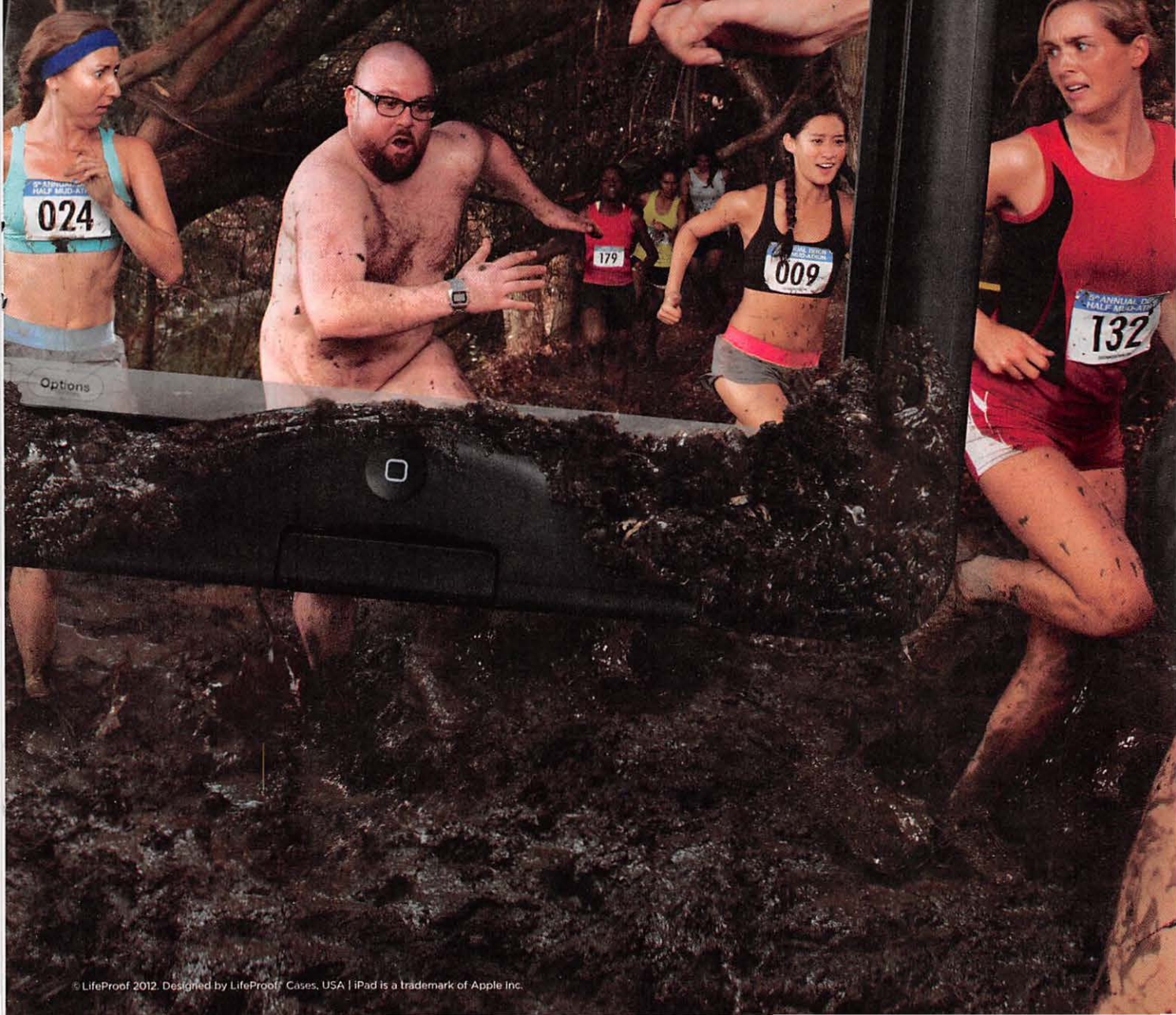
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## BOXING

THE CASE FOR...  
Andre Ward

BY CHRIS MANNIX

**T**here are two traditionally accepted paths to becoming a marketable star in boxing: either lose your head in front of the cameras or be willing to use it as a piñata in the ring. Floyd Mayweather Jr. didn't become Money Mayweather until HBO's 24/7 transmitted footage into our living rooms of him waving around stacks of cash and going on expletive-laced tirades; Manny Pacquiao became a million-pay-per-view-buys baby by being willing to absorb two shots to deliver one.

Mayweather, 35, and Pacquiao, 33, will be gone soon enough, leaving a vacuum at the top of the sport. On paper Andre Ward is in prime position to fill it. The 28-year-old Bay Area native is a 2004 Olympic gold medalist with an unblemished (25-0) professional record and a pair of super middleweight title belts around his waist. He's a chameleon in the ring, intelligent, precise, capable of dismantling aggressive opponents (Carl Froch, Sakio Bika) and tactical ones (Mikkel Kessler) alike. Since he turned pro in 2004, no one has sniffed a win against Ward, well, ever.

The problem? Ward, who is a committed Christian, doesn't fit into either of the aforementioned models. He's not crass. He doesn't curse. He won't take pictures with ring card girls or anyone holding a beer. His nickname is Son of God. It's not an act for the cameras, either: Ward's wife, Tiffney, says Ward is so squeaky clean that he refuses to speed up at a yellow light because, he says, "we all have to follow the laws of the land."

He doesn't fight wars in the ring because, frankly, he doesn't have to. Why stand toe-to-toe with an opponent when you can systematically pick him apart? When Ward was

in the amateurs, his trainer, Virgil Hunter, told him he never wanted him to come home from a tournament with the award for best bout. "That means he got beat up," says Hunter. Similarly, as a pro Ward has no interest in Fight of the Year. "No general is going to instruct his troops to jump out of the foxhole and run full steam ahead into fire," says Hunter. "You strategize, you win and you stay alive."

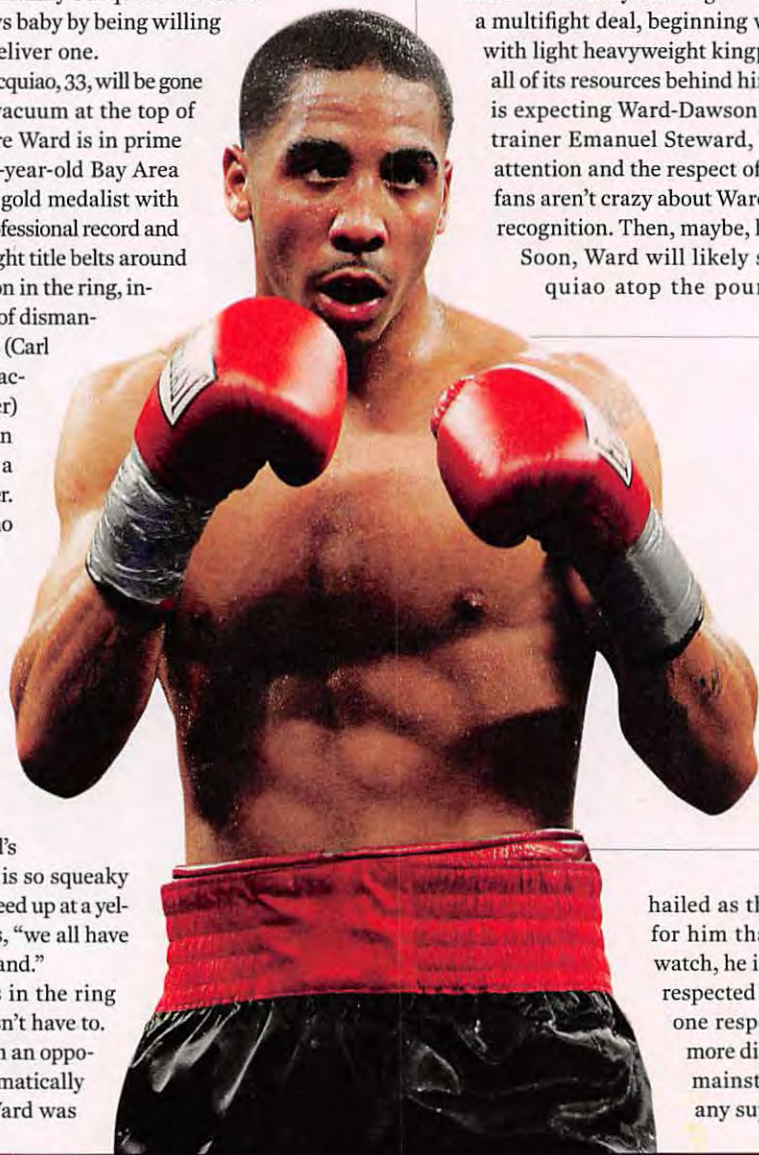
Ward could change, of course. It doesn't take a genius to call an opponent a bleeping bleepy bleep, and Ward can get into a slugfest simply by choosing not to duck. Except he's not wired that way. Ward cares about how he carries himself. He has plans for the future. In May he interned at Comcast SportsNet Bay Area, and he has been an analyst on ESPN, HBO and Showtime. "I want to create a legacy," says Ward.

Why shouldn't that be enough? Wake up, America: A boxer shouldn't have to live every line in a Jay-Z album or put his head on the proverbial chopping block to be appealing. Ward is to boxing what Roger Federer is to tennis, what Greg Maddux was to baseball; his marketability, his draw, rests solely and solidly upon his sheer excellence.

Some are already starting to believe in it. HBO signed Ward to a multifight deal, beginning with Saturday night's showdown with light heavyweight kingpin Chad Dawson, and is putting all of its resources behind him. In a battle of tacticians, no one is expecting Ward-Dawson to be a war. "But," says veteran trainer Emanuel Steward, "an impressive win will get the attention and the respect of the boxing public. The hardcore fans aren't crazy about Ward. But if he dominates, he will get recognition. Then, maybe, he can be another Mayweather."

Soon, Ward will likely supplant Mayweather and Pacquiao atop the pound-for-pound list. He will be

**WAKE UP, AMERICA:  
A BOXER SHOULDN'T  
HAVE TO LIVE  
EVERY LINE IN A  
JAY-Z ALBUM OR  
PUT HIS HEAD ON  
THE CHOPPING  
BLOCK TO BE  
APPEALING.**



hailed as the best boxer on the planet, and for him that will be enough. Watch, don't watch, he isn't changing. "I would rather be respected than known as an entertainer no one respects," says Ward. Hunter puts it more directly: "He might not become that mainstream superstar, but he will beat any superstar you put in front of him." □



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**DEAD MANAGER WALKING?**

Valentine, working on a mere two-year contract, quickly found the Fenway confines most unfriendly when he called out his own players but failed to recall an opposing pitcher.

Photograph by  
**ELISE AMENDOLA/AP**



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**DYSFUNCTIONAL**

divided flop

A year ago, the Red Sox were baseball's model franchise. Words



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5:14

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TO  
FENWAY PARK

FENWAY PARK  
100 YEARS

AMERICA'S  
MOST BELOVED  
BALLPARK

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L fail back-biting  
DISCONNECTED  
MISMANAGEMENT mediocrity

can only begin to describe how far they've fallen BY TOM VERDUCCI



**A**ugust 15, 2012, seemed like just another miserable night for one of the most loathsome teams ever foisted upon fans of the Red Sox. The most dysfunction \$175 million can buy lost 5-3 to an Orioles team that was better than Boston by seven wins with less than half the payroll and none of the pettiness. Bobby Valentine, revealed in a report the previous day as a manager the players wanted fired, had been ejected. But the night was about to get better for John Henry, the principal owner of the Red Sox.

Henry was sitting outside the Four Seasons Hotel in Denver with White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf and Blue Jays president and CEO Paul Beeston, enjoying some fresh air during a break in the baseball owners' meetings, when another familiar face approached him.

"I need to grab you for a minute."

It was Stan Kasten, the president of the Dodgers, a team that came under the ownership of Guggenheim Baseball in May and is in line for a regional television package after the 2013 season worth untold billions. Kasten had, in fact, placed a call two weeks earlier to Red Sox

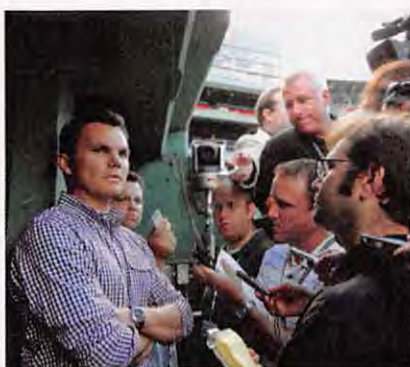
president Larry Lucchino. Then, Kasten had said, "This is an unusual call, Larry, but I want to tell you, we are out there and we are prepared to add significant payroll to make our team stronger this year and in the future."

Now Kasten was delivering the message to Henry, face-to-face and with even greater urgency. It was obvious what was going on—the Dodgers were flush with money and were willing to pay sticker price—and what this meant for the Red Sox, a franchise that had lost its way and disgraced its premium brand. Los Angeles was willing to be Boston's bailout fund.

Ten days later the Red Sox traded first baseman Adrian Gonzalez, outfielder Carl Crawford, pitcher Josh Beckett and infielder Nick Punto to the Dodgers for four minor leaguers and first baseman James Loney. The Red Sox, but for \$12 million they included in the trade, were off the hook from \$272 million worth of contracts, not to mention the brooding mug of Beckett and the unsightly hacks of Crawford, whenever he was healthy enough to play.

In 1991, Massachusetts was hit by a deadly Halloween nor'easter that was immortalized in print and film as *The Perfect Storm*. "This," Lucchino says, "was whatever the opposite is of a perfect storm." Never have a team and its fans been so happy to officially pull the plug on a season. Not only were they lucky to have found a trading partner that behaved like a hedge-fund manager in the midst of a midlife crisis, but the Red Sox were also fortunate they had become miserable to the point that the once-unthinkable act of deconstruction was an easy choice.

Less obvious is where the Red Sox go from here. They must decide what to do



**THE GREAT RED SOX BUBBLE OF 2012**

Even after last September's disaster, a \$175 million roster drove expectations sky-high, leaving Cherington (above) with the unenviable job of cleaning up the mess.

with their Captain Queeg, Valentine, as well as the \$104 million coming off the books this year alone. "I think you'll see a sort of slow and steady reinvestment of the money," Lucchino says. "What we were looking for was payroll flexibility, and we're not going to squander that payroll flexibility with intemperate actions immediately."

The Red Sox as we knew them are done, having collapsed upon themselves like the Beatles, the 2007 housing market and the Soviet Union. From 2003 through '08 they won two World Series and came within two wins of reaching two others. In the process Boston defined state of the art in baseball in building both a team and a brand. The franchise's quest to increase revenue could be measured in the inches it essentially annexed from the public sidewalks and streets around Fenway Park to sell more cold beer, pink hats and assorted other official totems of tribal affirmation.

To keep it all going, like a factory with three

shifts, the Red Sox ran at peak capacity. They sold every last obstructed-view seat at Fenway, charged the game's highest ticket prices, kept ratings and ad rates high on their television network, and kept signing or extending expensive veterans (Gonzalez, Crawford, Beckett, J.D. Drew, John Lackey, Edgar Renteria, Julio Lugo, Daisuke Matsuzaka, et al.) until they were more like the Yankees than they would ever dare admit. When they took New York to a Game 7 in the 2003 ALCS, the Red Sox' payroll was 65% of the Yankees'; by this year it was 84%. They have spent \$629 million over the past four years without a single postseason win to show for it.

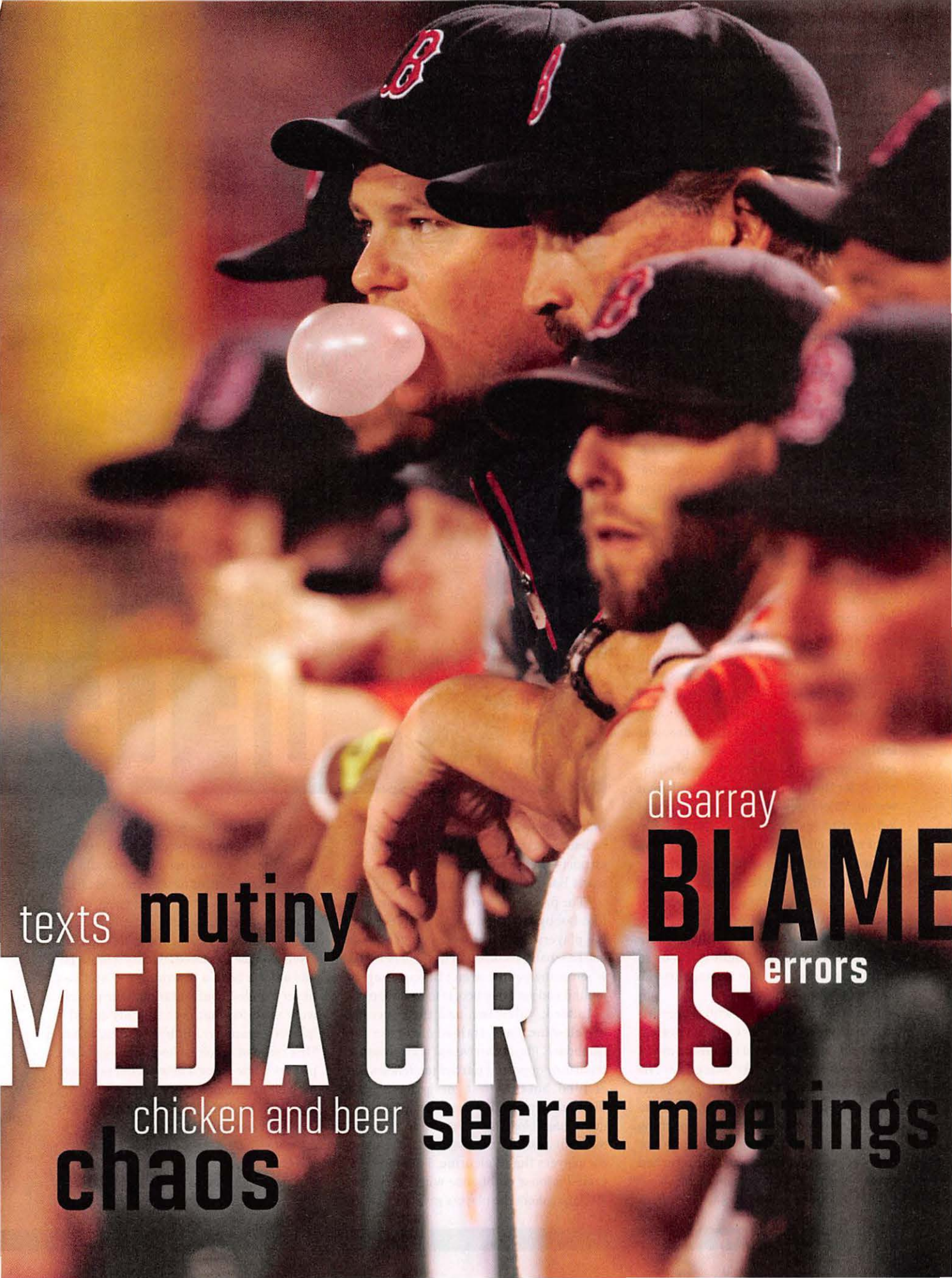
When former general manager Theo Epstein dared speak of a "bridge" season after an ALDS sweep at the hands of the Angels in 2009, indicating a need to scale back even if it meant taking a step backward in the standings for a year, team chairman Tom Werner later publicly rebuked him for even suggesting an idea like that in Boston. Now the bridge must be built. Asked via e-mail whether Boston's poor track record with top-end free agents leaves the club less inclined to invest in those kinds of players, Henry replied, "Yes."

"Other than losing and injuries," Henry wrote, "if you ask what the biggest disappointments were, I would say how hamstrung we were financially with long-term, expensive commitments and the level of our return on those commitments whether due to injury or poor play. . . ."

"But aside from the injuries, we have had no consistency. We would have poor at bats one night, poor starting pitching the next night, a poor bullpen the next. By mid-August it was clear we needed to rebuild. What appeared to be an outlier month in September 2011 turned out to be a harbinger instead."

**B**oston's 7-20 collapse last September chased Epstein and manager Terry Francona from their jobs. The ownership group quickly moved to promote one of Epstein's assistants, Ben Cherington, but finding a manager proved trickier. Cherington was identifying up-and-comers such as Dale Sveum (who was ultimately hired by Epstein to manage the Cubs), but Red Sox ownership didn't want a rookie G.M. and a rookie manager. One day Valentine's agent telephoned Lucchino to say Valentine wanted the job. Valentine hadn't been in a major league dugout in a decade, but the phone call and his reputation for being a





texts **mutiny** **BLAME** **MEDIA CIRCUS** **errors**

chicken and beer **secret meetings** **chaos**



## FALL OF THE RED SOX

cutting-edge tactician were enough to gain him traction with ownership.

In retrospect, Valentine was doomed to fail because 1) Cherington had not wanted to hire him (though he did warm to him during the interview process); 2) Valentine, never known to play well with others, was not allowed to handpick his coaching staff; 3) the Red Sox owners gave him the least support possible: a two-year contract. (One-year deals for new hires are virtually unheard of.) The owners were so unsure about dropping Valentine into this group of players that they considered 2012 something of a trial, like trying on a boldly styled suit. They would reassess the fit after the season.

It was evident quickly that Valentine, thanks partly to his confrontational reputation and partly to his aloof, off-putting carriage, could not win the trust of key players, especially when he took an open shot at third baseman Kevin Youkilis in April and was reprimanded through the media by second baseman Dustin Pedroia. (Youkilis was traded to the White Sox two months later.) "If you're going to manage today, you better have the important players in the clubhouse," says one NL manager. "You have to work through them; otherwise you lose the others."

Another key April misstep occurred when Valentine didn't know whether an opposing pitcher, Liam Hendriks of the Twins, was lefthanded or righthanded when he made out his lineup. He admitted he checked his phone for the information—and still got it wrong. Valentine laughed it off, but it was a dagger to his credibility, especially in light of the club's ethos. The Red Sox had earned a reputation as a forward-thinking franchise with proprietary metrics, sophisticated scouting reports and a secret computer program dubbed Carmine to catalog and update the streams of information. Francona would arrive eight hours or so before game time to begin sorting through the daily piles of analysis.

Privately the owners, who worry incessantly about how the team is covered, grumbled that members of the Boston media were prewired not to like Valentine. The opposing-pitcher snafu, they thought, wasn't a big deal. But snafus seem to happen a lot to Valentine. In August he referred to pitching coach Bob McClure's being "on vacation" for two weeks, when the coach had returned home because of a family emergency. Last Friday, Valentine showed up at the park in

### UNSPLendid SPLINTER

Boston has gone 16–29 since Ortiz went on the DL with an Achilles injury in July; the tension of a lost season has boiled over in dugout arguments like the one between Alfredo Aceves and Pedroia in Oakland last Saturday (far right).

blown  
leads  
unprepared

SELLOUT  
STREAK

injuries FUNE  
LACK OF LEA

Oakland at 4:15 p.m. for a 7:05 game because he had been picking up his adult son at the airport—then watched a 20–2 defeat, the worst Boston beating in a dozen years.

"The problem when you have a manager like Bobby is you're always refereeing if the players don't like the manager," says one baseball executive. "That gets old. And when some people aren't happy, they go around and get other people to be unhappy."

Indeed, Valentine, and the coverage of Valentine, have drained energy in the clubhouse. Players arrive not with scouting reports or opposing pitcher tendencies top of mind, but the latest gossip about what their manager said or how he was covered in the latest blogs, talks shows and columns. Such misplaced priorities say more about the players than Valentine. Francona operated a loose clubhouse with few rules, an atmosphere the players grew to exploit.

Valentine, too, did not bring many rules with him. Without his own staff or much muscle behind him from ownership, he would sequester himself in his neatly arranged office. Outside that office the lack of rules, discipline and focus continued to be a problem.

"I think Bobby has done a hell of a job given what he has faced," Henry wrote. "He has always been a lightning rod and has never avoided confrontation. Our players were used to what is commonly called a 'players' manager.' Bobby just isn't that. He's more of an old-school manager with players while being a new-school manager with his approach to tactics and everything else. He's brilliant but not someone who's going to be liked by everyone. Popularity is overrated, but he's had a tough go this year."

What to do about Valentine is the owners' first major decision in rebranding this team. The owners could bring him back in 2013



on his current contract, leaving him with even less security as the lamest of ducks. They could continue to jettison players and coaches not in his camp and extend his contract after the worst Red Sox season in 15 years. Or they could fire him and find the state-of-the-art manager Cherington wanted in the first place. (They could try to pry John Farrell from Toronto or hire Blue Jays first base coach Torey Lovullo.) "Firing Bobby V would be admitting a mistake," says another baseball executive, "but you have to do it to move forward, to show you're not picking sides in this thing after getting rid of players."

Alex Gordon of Kansas City, Justin Upton of Arizona or Chase Headley of San Diego. The Red Sox might also explore trading centerfielder Jacoby Ellsbury, a free agent after next season, for longer-term assets.

"Do we believe Boston and Red Sox Nation will accept a young and hungry baseball team?" Lucchino says. "Yeah, I think they will. Our intention is to make sure it's a mixture of young and hungry and older and more established. There's a notion that we've got to have high-priced brand names in our lineup to make it work. Don't assume that's the case."

The Red Sox also need to emphasize play-

ers with extroverted personalities, such as rightfielder Cody Ross, who has fit in well this season on a one-year deal. Players uncomfortable with the intensity of the media coverage—think Renteria, Drew, Crawford and Lackey—tend to fare poorly in Boston. Even Gonzalez was something of a poor fit. Teammates were surprised that someone so talented was so sensitive to how he and the team were covered. (A July text to ownership asking for a team meeting at which Valentine's

performance was discussed was reportedly sent from Gonzalez's phone.)

When Gonzalez arrived in Los Angeles, he admitted to reporters that he changed this year—becoming "more outspoken" after hearing last year that he should be more vocal. "The way things were spinned is unfortunate," he said. The unanswered question: Why would an established star care about that at all? Why change?

The Red Sox need to return to being a leaner, more disciplined organization that—starting with ownership—doesn't allow media coverage to drain its focus. If, for instance, Boston won't immediately reinvest all of the \$104 million coming off this year's payroll, it should be up front with fans by de-emphasizing the questionable sellout streak at

Fenway (now at 782 games) and by cutting ticket prices across the board.

"Do you mean consider lowering ticket prices if we don't spend all of our budget in 2013?" Henry wrote. "One thing is clear: we generally end up above budget so to have one year under budget in a rebuilding wouldn't be out of the question."

Three days after the bailout trade, Major League Baseball announced an agreement with ESPN to extend their broadcast partnership through 2021 for about \$700 million annually—a 94% increase over their current agreement. The other national television partnerships are still in negotiations, but assuming a similar percentage increase in those rights fees, every team starting in 2014 will see its cut from national TV money increase from \$25.5 million to \$49.6 million. That's another \$24.1 million for your team to spend.

Not only will the Red Sox have more money coming in, they will also have the same ownership that built the 2003–08 success. They still have a loyal fan base with high expectations, and the Yankees as the next-door neighbor with the bigger house and the bigger car to motivate them. It won't be long before the payroll ramps up again. Almost overnight, their payroll flexibility has become an asset. Boston, for instance, has only \$47.2 million on the books for the 2014 and '15 seasons combined; the Yankees have \$143.3 million in commitments for those years.

"It is a change in course," Lucchino said, "not an entirely new direction."

On Aug. 31, 2011, a comfortable evening at Fenway with a sweet breeze blowing in from rightfield, the Red Sox beat the Yankees 9–5. They had the best record in the American League, stability in the dugout and in the front office, an MVP candidate in Gonzalez, an AL ERA leader in Beckett and a nine-game cushion on a playoff spot.

That moment in time seems ancient now, like a lost civilization. The Red Sox used 12 players to win that game. Eight of them are gone (Gonzalez, Crawford, Beckett, Marco Scutaro, Jason Varitek, Jed Lowrie, Josh Reddick and Jonathan Papelbon), as well as the manager and general manager. Boston is 69–93 since then. It took being that bad and that unlikely for that long, coupled with the Dodgers' money, for the Red Sox to disown what they had become. They are better for such clarity. □



**N**o matter the manager, the Red Sox are likely to be a younger, cheaper team that may not be ready to contend next season. Boston does have a core of exciting young players: third baseman Will Middlebrooks, catcher Ryan Lavarnway, infielders Xander Bogaerts and Jose Iglesias, outfielders Bryce Brentz and Jackie Bradley Jr., pitcher Matt Barnes and the key prospects received in the Los Angeles trade, pitchers Rubby De La Rosa and Allen Webster.

This winter's big-ticket free-agent market probably won't help the Red Sox: Neither pitcher Zack Greinke, because of his introverted nature, nor outfielder Josh Hamilton, because of his age (32 next year) and injury history, is a good fit for a skittish big-city buyer. The key for Boston will be finding good value in short-term deals and dipping into the farm system to trade for young, established stars along the lines of

**SI.COM**

Ben Reiter traces the long, strange trip of Dodgers G.M. Ned Colletti, who helped make the Red Sox bailout of 2012 possible, at [SI.com/mlb](http://SI.com/mlb)









# NO PRESSURE, MAN

For most teams the fate of the franchise—in the form of that highly drafted, high-priced quarterback—often boils down to the blocking prowess of a guy like Tyler Polumbus. Who? Precisely

BY MATT GAGNE

Photograph by MICHAEL JOHNSON/ZUMAPRESS.COM

REDSKINS QUARTERBACK  
ROBERT GRIFFIN III (BELOW)

PROTECTED BY  
RT TYLER POLUMBUS (LEFT)



TOM DIPACE (RG3)

**A** behemoth right tackle who stands 6' 8" and weighs 305 pounds, the Redskins' Tyler Polumbus seems to have little in common with Darrelle Revis, the Jets' All-Pro cornerback, who is nine inches shorter, 107 pounds lighter and millions of dollars richer. Yet despite their disparate body types and different objectives—one man protects the quarterback, the other makes life hell for him—both 27-year-olds share perhaps the hardest job in football: backedpedaling on a remote island.

"A lot of times you don't have any help at tackle—you're out there by yourself," Polumbus says. "And you're probably going against one of the best athletes on the other team."

As today's pass-oriented offenses have become more intricate and fast-paced, the lineman's role has become more challenging. Drew Brees, Tom Brady and Matthew Stafford can't throw for 5,000 yards if the men in front of them aren't providing them enough time. Cam Newton won't run his way into the record books if his linemen aren't holding their blocks downfield. Andrew Luck, Robert Griffin III and other rookie starters will have no hope of finding a rhythm if they're under constant pressure. (See Gabbert, Blaine, 2011.) More than ever, players who typically toil in obscurity—tackles, guards and centers—will be critical to a team's success or failure in the 2012 season. And in Washington, where

hopes for a Redskins revival rest with Griffin, the line will be under an intense spotlight.

The biggest misconception about pass protection is that it's akin to trench warfare: two immobile sides slogging it out. Linemen may start out in three-point stances and clash violently at the snap, but the big men don't always dig in. Like Revis's battles against wideouts on the perimeter, the struggles up front are often decided by microscopic differences in footwork, balance and hand placement to maximize leverage. And while the blockers' jobs change according to defensive fronts and blitz packages, the assignments for offensive linemen are as programmed as NFL commercial breaks.

After calling out protection orders and snapping the ball, the center sets the depth of the pocket along with the guards. Colliding with pass rushers like sumo wrestlers, the interior linemen must not cede ground or get turned perpendicular to the line of scrimmage. Their success allows the tackles to focus on the pocket's width, driving edge rushers away at an angle, like basketball defenders forcing ball handlers toward the baseline. If it's all executed in harmony, a halo forms around the quarterback.

"Everything is based on rhythm," says Chris Foerster, Washington's offensive line coach. "But if something breaks down, our quarterback can extend plays. It's not quite the same thing as blocking for Barry Sanders in the running game, but we have to be aware that Griffin has the ability to scramble."

There's a good chance the 2011 Heisman winner and second pick in this year's



draft will have plenty of improvising to do. Washington's line has surrendered at least 41 sacks in each of the past three seasons, and the unit is still searching for consistency and cohesiveness following a spate of preseason injuries. "We had a patchwork group, and it wasn't a good enough production last year," Foerster says. "It's still a wait-and-see thing for us this year."

**C**onventional wisdom holds that the most important player on the line is the left tackle, who is charged with protecting the quarterback's blind side. That's why Washington used the fourth pick in the 2010 draft on Trent Williams, a 6' 5", 328-pound All-America from Oklahoma. But it can be argued that in 2012 Polumbus—an undrafted free agent out of Colorado who has played with three teams in four seasons and hasn't started more than eight games in any them—will be the key lineman for the Redskins.

Originally slated to be Washington's swing tackle, providing spot service on both sides of the line, Polumbus was thrust into a starting role at right tackle when two-time Pro Bowler Jammal Brown suffered a hip injury during training camp. (Brown had surgery on Aug. 23 and will remain on the physically-unable-to-perform list for at least the first six games.) "You always want to earn your spot; you never want it to come through an injury, but an opportunity is an opportunity," says Polumbus, who will be responsible for guarding the pocket's right flank, where the righthanded Griffin can most easily roll out to avoid pressure.

Given Griffin's mobility, Polumbus can't simply push defensive ends and blitzing linebackers wide and wait for them to come back; he must remain in constant contact with his opposite number, in anticipation of Griffin's maneuvering from a collapsed pocket. "Our offense is about timing, but RG3 may try to make some plays with his feet, and we're going to have to block our guys a little bit longer," Polumbus says. "As offensive linemen we can't have a clock in our head."

The Redskins might have tried to find a more established right tackle when Brown went down if the NFL hadn't docked them \$36 million in cap room over the next two seasons for loading player salaries into the uncapped 2010 season. But Polumbus, who will make a reported \$700,000 this year, broke into the league in 2008 with Mike

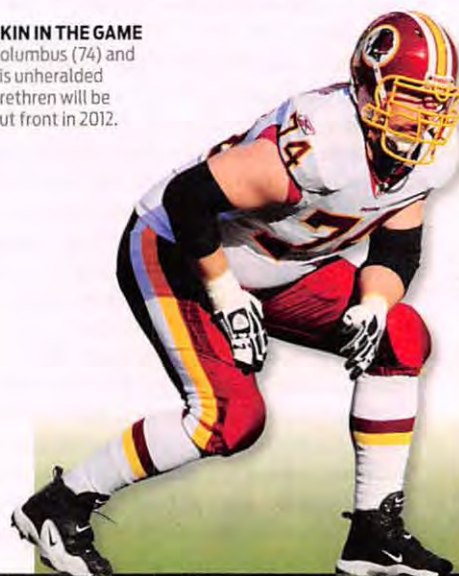
Shanahan's Broncos and knows the zone-blocking schemes that Shanahan brought with him to Washington when he became coach in 2010. He also has a talent for downfield blocking, more reason to keep an eye on him when Redskins' plays break down. You might recall Marshawn Lynch's wild 67-yard touchdown run in the Seahawks-Saints NFC wild-card game two years ago, when he broke seven tackles on the way to the end zone. Chances are you don't remember his lead blocker. It was Polumbus, who lined up at left guard on the play, cleared out his man to the right, then ran down the field with Lynch. By the end of the run Polumbus was five yards in front of Lynch and knocked the final would-be tackler off balance to clear Lynch's way across the goal line.

"I've seen him evolve over the years, and Tyler is definitely a starting-caliber tackle," says Loren Landow, a Denver-based trainer who first saw Polumbus as a 240-pound high school senior. This summer, as he trained alongside soon-to-be Olympic gold medalist Missy Franklin, Polumbus focused on improving the range of motion in his ankles, knees and hips. How well he protects Griffin has less to do with brute strength than with Polumbus's ability to pivot, twist, shuffle with and shadow rushers.

"Every player across our line has something he can work on, but Tyler's never led us to believe he's going to struggle," Foerster says. "After Jammal went down and [Tyler] stepped in, there wasn't a day we thought we had a huge hole at tackle."

For the sake of Griffin and the Redskins, that assessment had better be right. □

**SKIN IN THE GAME**  
Polumbus (74) and his unheralded brethren will be out front in 2012.



JAGUARS QB  
**BLAINE GABBERT**  
PROTECTED BY  
**RG UCHE**  
**NWANERI**

The Jaguars ranked dead last in total offense last season, rushing champ Maurice Jones-Drew held out for the entire preseason, and Gabbert still needs to prove himself worthy of the 10th pick in last year's draft. Gabbert was sacked 40 times during his rookie season, and offensive line coach Andy Heck describes pass protection as "something we've been working very hard at to improve." But what the 6' 3", 310-pound Nwaneri has been doing for the past five seasons in Jacksonville is jack up defensive linemen in the ground game.

"He plays with good leverage," Heck says. "In the simplest of terms, you want to displace a D-lineman out of his gap or change the line scrimmage even one yard into the defense's territory. To do that, you have to be lower than the other guy and keep your hands inside your framework. Once you get under him, you have to lever him out like you'd jack up a car. Uche is able to play with great knee bend. He gets his hands inside, then uncoils hips and legs and literally levers a defender out of the position he's in."

**SERVE**

AL MESSERSCHMIDT/GETTY IMAGES (POLUMBUS); DAMIAN STROHMAYER (GABBERT); ION SMI (NWANERI); STEVE MITCHELL/US PRESSWIRE (FITZPATRICK); KEVIN HOFFMAN/US PRESSWIRE (WOOD); AL TIELEMANS (NEWTON); PAUL ASIENSKI/AP (SILATOLU); JOHN BIEVER (CUTLER); EVAN PINKUS/AP (WEBB)





BILLS QB  
RYAN FITZPATRICK  
PROTECTED BY  
**C ERIC  
WOOD**

After tearing his right ACL in a Week 10 blowout loss at Dallas, the 6' 4", 310-pound Wood returns to anchor an offensive line that allowed the fewest sacks (23) in the league last season. But don't be fooled: Buffalo missed Wood's savvy pass-protection calls. In the seven games without him, the Bills allowed 13 of their quarterback takedowns. Says offensive line coach Joe D'Alessandris, "Eric was doing an excellent job of orchestrating the line until the injury."

Look for the 26-year-old Wood to set the frenetic pace as Buffalo experiments with the no-huddle this season and seeks more consistency from Fitzpatrick, who threw nearly as many interceptions (a league-high 23) as he did touchdowns (24) in 2011. "Just watch Wood for the entire play," D'Alessandris says. "Once he attaches himself to his opponent, he'll do everything in his power to block him. I've watched a lot of centers, and his tenacity to get it done is something impressive. I don't know if there are any true trademarks in blocking except for the effort put into it from the beginning to the end."



PANTHERS QB  
CAM NEWTON  
PROTECTED BY  
**LG AMINI  
SILATOLU**

Carolina ranked first in rushing touchdowns, including 14 by Newton, and there's no reason to expect a drop-off just because a rookie from Division II Midwestern State is replacing an eight-year pro, Travelle Wharton, at left guard. Taken in the second round of the 2012 draft, the 6' 4", 315-pound Silatolu will be flanked by two-time Pro Bowler Jordan Gross at left tackle and three-time Pro Bowler Ryan Kalil at center. Both veterans will give Silatolu directions coming out of the huddle and make sure he responds to the proper checks at the line.

Then again, Silatolu may be able to answer any questions his more experienced teammates have. "Cam did a couple of things last year that young guys usually don't get right away—understanding protections—and we feel the same way about Amini this year," coach Ron Rivera says. "We like his size and physical play. He's very aggressive. He came from a small college, but he dominated everybody he played against. When he first got here, he struggled with the quickness of the game. But he's arrived."



BEARS QB  
JAY CUTLER  
PROTECTED BY  
**LT J'MARCUS  
WEBB**

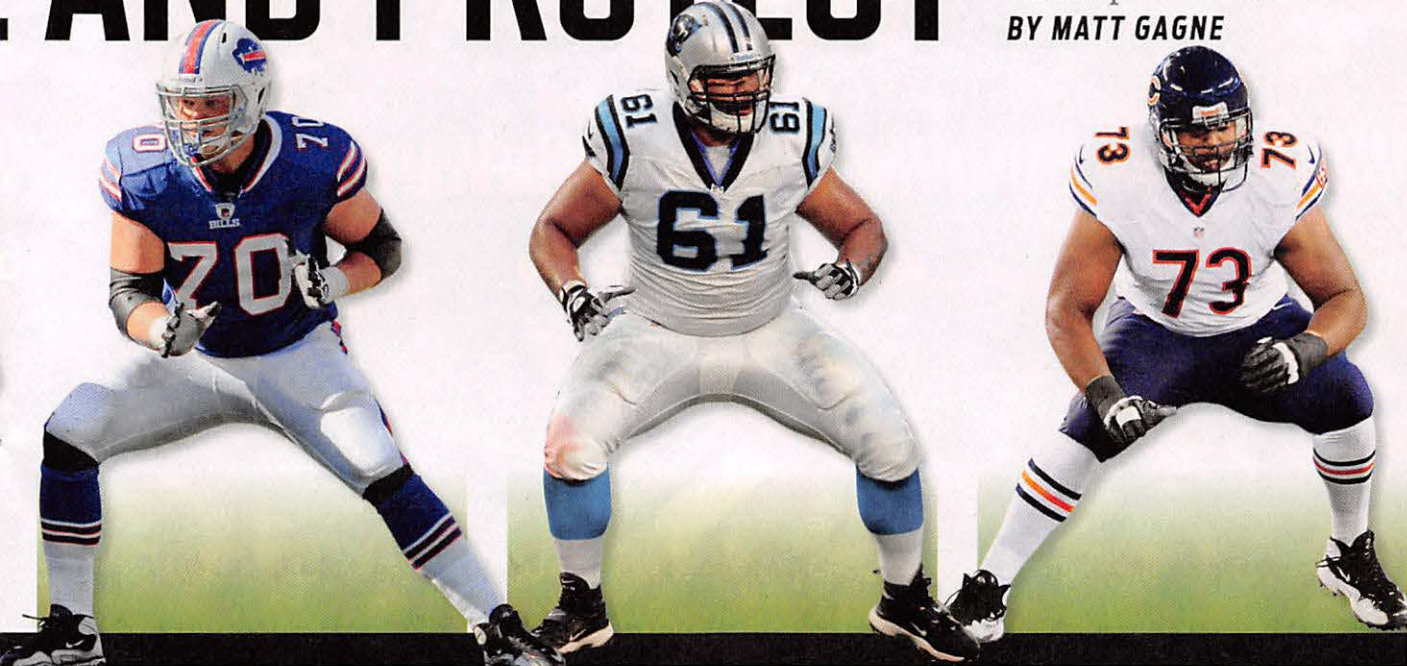
Cutler, who has been sacked more times than any other quarterback (75) over the past two seasons, might want to consider hiring a bodyguard to join him on the field in 2012. The 6' 8", 335-pound Webb, a 2010 seventh-round pick out of West Texas A&M, played primarily on the right side as a rookie but started all 16 games at left tackle for Chicago last year. He did not distinguish himself: Webb was responsible for 14 of the Bears' 49 sacks allowed and was also called for more penalties (14) than any other offensive lineman in the league. Yet once again he has the job of protecting Cutler's blind side.

Does he even take that responsibility seriously? In mid-August offensive coordinator Mike Tice questioned Webb's progress, and Webb responded by posting a poem on his Facebook page: "Every morning I wake up, and get out of bed, while thoughts of preparing to battle dance in my head. No visions of cupcakes and tacos. Just football and being the best Left Tackle! . . . I'm giving my best everyday and there simply isn't anything left to say—BEAR DOWN!!!!" That will certainly reassure Chicago.

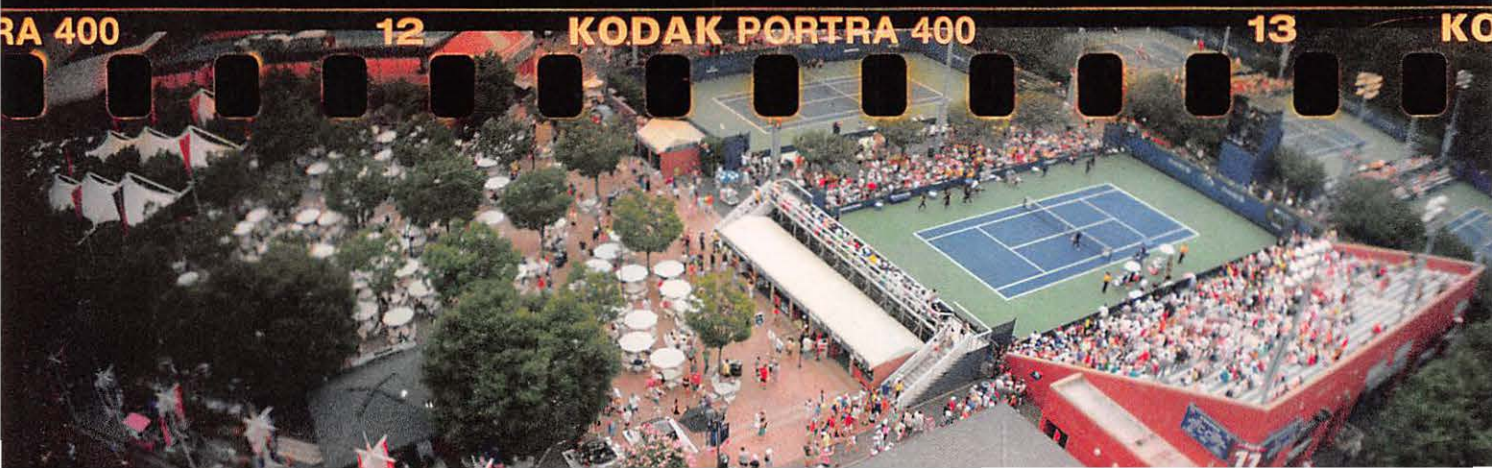
# AND PROTECT

Four other lineman join Tyler Polumbus to form a No-Star squad of blockers on the spot this season

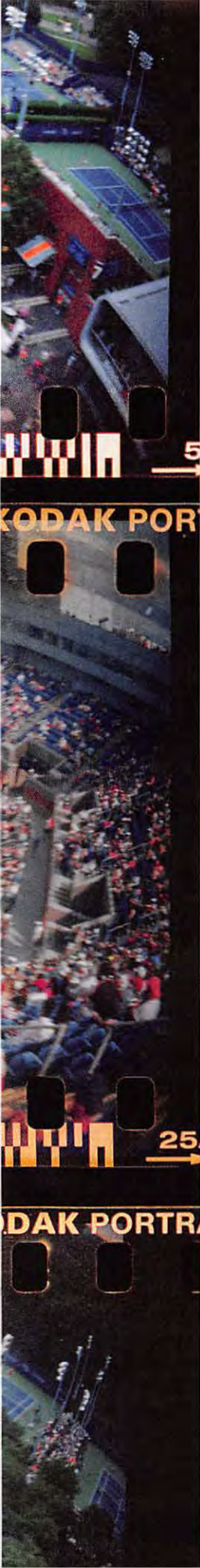
**BY MATT GAGNE**











U.S. OPEN

# BIGGER, RICHER, CALMER, COOLER

Oh, the U. S. Open has changed—less raw, more polished, the nouveau province of the hipster and the high-heeled. But the old electricity? It still courses through the most thrilling fortnight in sports

**BY S.L. PRICE**

Photographs by **SIMON BRUTY**

## TENNIS SPRAWL

Three panoramic images of the Open's vast grounds, shot with a Sprocket Rocket camera, which allows light to bleed over the entire film plane, help explain why this tournament is the best-attended annual sporting event in the world.

**T**hat smell. You thought you wouldn't get that anymore, not here, not after all the millions spent, the stadia built, the effort made year after year to scour, paint, sandblast and haul it away. It's most noticeable in this small corner of Flushing Meadow before the tournament begins: The food-court ovens aren't cooking yet, the thousands of bodies still haven't poured through the gates. Still, that smell—of a steamy subway stop, of a CBGB's toilet, of the U.S. Open circa

1991—was supposed to be history, wasn't it?

But, no, the scent is unmistakable. And, oddly enough, you don't find it unpleasant, not in the least, because it almost seems intentional in this tableau, a living reminder of how life used to be. "A lot of people just stand there and watch," says Burford Smith. "I want to get a sign that says IT'S NOT POLITE TO STARE."

But it's hard not to. Wedged under the stands at Louis Armstrong Stadium, next to a deafening air-conditioning unit and below a flaking pipe bearing God-knows-what, four wobbly tables and one vinyl printer serve as headquarters for the 2012 Open's most hands-on job. DRAWBOARD PRODUCTION OFFICE reads a little sign, tongue only slightly in cheek: Wasps, high wind and rain are problems here. For years, Smith shared this space with a family of raccoons.

Still, you can't beat it for convenience. Just outside is the catwalk onto which Smith and his partner, Frank Ayala, scramble daily: Up and down the four 40-foot-high sliding ladders, strapped in and clenching the sticky-backed strips of scores and players' names—1,201 by tournament's end—in their teeth. Smith travels from Atlanta and Ayala from Southern California each year to spend the Open updating the most scrutinized patch of the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center: 4,000 square feet of blue plywood bolted to Armstrong's flank.

Mistakes do happen. "You spelled it wrong," an old lady once yelled up to Smith.

"Which one?" Smith said.

"I'm not going to tell. You should know."

This is Smith's eighth year. He has a fierce sense of ownership of the board, likes telling people, "The players haven't won their match until I say they've won their match." He also gets up for events like Arthur Ashe Kids Day, and he likes the way Maria Sharapova and Roger Federer handle stardom. But other players? "I wouldn't throw water on 'em if they were on fire," he says.

Smith's irreverence seems important. You'd like to think it's of a piece with his gritty surroundings, a hint that the Open's famously manic soul might yet survive even the most spectacular success. But Smith doesn't know that. He wants to help. He's just about exhausted his store of drawboard tales, in fact, when he remembers his trump card. He'd like not to care, but even Smith knows that nothing lends legitimacy at Flushing Meadow now more than the presence of a big star—and if it's a TV talk-show host who tweets to 13 million followers, well, all the better. For



## U.S. OPEN

the first time in 20 minutes Smith grins, he's so pleased.

"Ellen was here," he says.

**W**ho cares? You do. Because when, 15 years ago, Venus and Serena Williams locked arms in the hallway of the newly opened, 23,000-seat Ashe Stadium and sang, "Let the sideshow begin," you knew they weren't just laying down a track for their own tumultuous futures. The U.S. Open may not have Wimbledon's stateliness or Roland Garros's style, may not have the pure ease of the Australian Open, but it has long been the game's leading indicator, the Grand Slam event that tells us better than any other where pro tennis will go next. The tiebreak, equal prize money, night play, electronic line calling—all began in Queens, and if you're seeking the game's next innovation, try following the hypnotic dips, zooms and hovers of the Spider-Cam now doing eerily spectacular work around Ashe Stadium.

Meanwhile, you can get any U.S. Tennis Association suit to describe more construction plans, a vague intention of slapping roofs on Ashe and Armstrong someday, but last week turned out to be more about subtraction than addition. On Thursday, Andy Roddick, the last U.S. male winner of a major and No. 1, celebrated his 30th birthday with the surprise announcement that he would retire at the end of the 2012 Open. "I've always wanted to, in a perfect world, finish at this event," he said.

Though Roddick came of age in Ashe Stadium—where he won his 2003 Open title and has competed in more night matches than any American man—he's one of the last active players who can recall what came before. As an eight-year-old in 1990 he snuck into the old players' lounge and played video games with Pete Sampras, and the next year Roddick managed to wriggle, with only a grounds pass, into four matches of Jimmy Connors's hallowed run to the semis. That such a move would be nearly impossible today is only another reason this year's Open felt like the end of an era, a time to take stock.

So off you wander through the tournament's days and nights, past the gleaming Mercedes display and through the well-coiffed, well-toned throng. You see far fewer fans these days garbed in tennis togs, as if waiting for Federer to call them out of the stands to rally, because there seems far fewer who'd actually be interested. It's not easy rip-



**"IT'S A DIFFERENT FEEL NOW," SAYS A LONGTIME OPEN REFEREE. "THE ENERGY'S STILL THERE, BUT IT'S NOT THE BLEACHER MENTALITY."**

ping a forehand while holding a \$12 mojito, especially in high heels.

You take the old rattletrap elevator that used to steam up to the tin-can press box above Armstrong, now long gone. You walk along the seam between the stadium and the Grandstand, to the corners where the bottles and cans and paper mounds used to gather. You walk through the humming food court to the gorgeous new bullring, Court 17, as cozy as a beanbag chair. The ground is spotless. Garbage nestles in plastic-bag-lined cans. When players pass en route to a court, surrounded by four security guards, reaching out is frowned upon.

"It's tamer—don't you feel that?" Chris Evert says when you track her down at the ESPN trailer one afternoon. She recalls her semifinal against Martina Navratilova in 1981; the two of them patiently sitting down in the third set to wait out a brawl in Armstrong's stands. The deafening jets still flew

low over the matches then. Smoke from a nearby hamburger stand used to envelop players on Court 4. Court lighting was laughable. Fans had a rep, established during the chaotic 1979 match between Ilie Nastase and John McEnroe, for threatening to swarm the court if they didn't like a call.

"Back then, anything went," Evert says. "It's more controlled now. I didn't have security: People were touching me and wanting autographs and pictures and having conversations: 'Chris, how do you feel about today's match?' You don't get any of that now."

From 1978, when the Open moved from Forest Hills to Flushing Meadow, to '96, the year before Ashe Stadium opened, players used to walk the quarter mile from the locker room to Armstrong. As the matches progressed, the crowds grew, until by the final





#### OPEN SEASON

The tournament provides unparalleled vantage points, from the drawboard ladder (left) to the celebrity-studded grounds, where you might find (clockwise from below, upper left) Redfoo and Kim Clijsters; Hilaria Thomas (Mrs. Alec Baldwin); Tucci and his wife, Felicity Blunt; Ovechkin; Azarenka and fans; and No. 52-ranked Martin Klizan.

there. I knew right away if I was going to be liked or not, which fires you up either way. 'Come on, Borg! Come on, Mac! Come on, Jimmy!' Thousands of people revving you up. Nothing will ever be like that."

Funny. You would argue that tennis today is in the latter stages of a golden age, with record prize money, wall-to-wall TV coverage, scads of information online. The level of play is better than ever. But this is an iTennis Era, sleek and cool, with a Facebook level of intimacy. Now when finalists leave the locker room in Ashe, hallway security doors slam shut, leaving the players to themselves, a few hangers-on, the lights of the network cameras. "We keep the players off-limits from everything and everybody," says a USTA guide leading a tour of the press room last Saturday night.

"Really?" asks a visitor. "Why?"

Because in 1993, top-ranked Monica Seles was stabbed by a fan. In 2001, two days after Lleyton Hewitt stunned Sampras in the men's final, security worldwide was revolutionized by the attacks of 9/11. Who can argue that something needed to change?

when he set up camp in his Ashe suite next to the TV booth, scanning matches like a lord. Armstrong got scaled down and spruced up, and the Open, once "the quintessential New York venue," according to longtime tournament referee Brian Earley, began to evolve. "It's a different New York feel now, more high-class," Earley says. "The energy's still there, but it's not the bleacher mentality."

Not even close, though on a hot night in Ashe's upper deck a brawl can still break out, distracting fans from the moment when they, too, appear on the stadium's big screen. As in Melbourne, Paris and London, the first-week scramble by purists to find—then brag about—an early-round epic remains a blood sport. But it often seems that competitive name-dropping is just as important.

"The Trumps of the world sit in the front row, and when you watch the tapes after, you say, 'Whoa, he was watching my match?'" says 1988 Open champ Mats Wilander, now a Eurosport commentator. "That is very New York. They have 'em in France, but you don't know who they are. Everybody knows the American celebrities. And they're just normal people, which they prove every time they come and watch tennis."

They wouldn't be celebs if that were really true, but Wilander has a point: The less styled, less assisted, less entourage a bold-faced name is, the more valuable the sighting. Hence the excitement surrounding Washington Capitals superstar Alex Ovechkin. On Day 1, the face of Russian hockey showed up outside the President's Gate, toting a bag for girlfriend Maria Kirilenko, the No. 14 seed, and blowing big green bubbles with his gum. The Grand Slam tournament first played on the genteel grass of Forest Hills has been trending this way for a while—ever since former USTA CEO Arlen Kantarian made it a mission in 2000 "to make this the place where sports, entertainment, fashion and celebrity people come together in one event."

"We hired a p.r. firm in New York City, and their sole responsibility was to pull together the celebrities and invite them to the Open," said Kantarian. "We rolled out the red carpet." Literally. On Aug. 27 a 12-foot-long stretch of scarlet pile was taped to the sidewalk outside Ashe Stadium. Stanley Tucci and Jordin Sparks dutifully walked the only gantlet left, stopping in front of a Moët-sponsored backdrop for the jungle of cameras and boom mikes.

Still, it's a far more institutionalized affair than in the 1990s, when the Open merely



a 10-deep throng had gathered to scream, snap flashbulbs and size up the players as they trooped, championship-bout-style, over the concourse to the court.

You put in a call to Connors, who won the Open five times. "You broke through the doors, and it was like the parting of the Red Sea," he says from California. "The fans were standing there, and the energy started

**T**he opening of Ashe in 1997, with a monstrous upper bowl set atop 90 luxury suites that lease now for \$250,000 apiece, demanded that the event change its character. The \$285 million cost needed to be paid. Ticket prices rose. The U.S. Open needed to be sold like never before.

Real estate mogul and attention hound Donald Trump set the aggressively luxe tone



comped tickets for singer Barbra Streisand so she could pronounce Andre Agassi a "zen master." By the time Ellen DeGeneres broadcast her show from Flushing during the 2010 Open—ending on a catwalk with her name unveiled as the "winner" on Burford Smith's drawboard—Kantarian's hope of turning the fortnight into DISNEYLAND WITH NETS had been realized. Last Friday night fans filled Ashe for Roddick's potential last match. But the loudest ovation by far during his second-round romp over Bernard Tomic came when singer Keith Urban gave his wife, Nicole Kidman, a kiss on the big screen.

Frisolous? Sure. But leveraging celebrity—making the Open a must-do New York scene—has proved a brilliant marketing stroke for a sport that, since the fade of its 1970s boom, has struggled with a deep inferiority complex. If U.S. stars such as Sampras weren't fending off charges of being "boring," tennis was bristling over the world's endless fascination with Tiger Woods. That's why Woods's appearance at Roddick's last final here, in 2006, made tennis wonks so happy. When Tiger sits in Federer's box, or LMFAO singer Redfoo joins Victoria Azarenka for a press conference, or No. 1 golfer Rory McIlroy fills out girlfriend Caroline Wozniacki's entourage, some cool has to rub off.

During Kantarian's tenure (2000–08), Open revenues rose by \$70 million. This year's fortnight will net some \$110 million and, if the weather holds, threaten the two-week 2009 attendance record of 721,059. In terms of tickets sold, there's now no bigger annual sporting event on the planet. Just as telling, though, is how the players have bought in. Like it or not, they've learned: Tennis alone isn't enough anymore.

"Players are different now; they embrace technology," Earley says. "Twenty years ago [if] you put those big screens up there and ran live action in the middle of play, I can tell you five players who would've said, 'We're not doing that.' Players now love that s---. Getting interviewed before a match? We had players who wouldn't get interviewed the first year. Now? They're onstage, acting!"

**M**aybe, though, it's too easy, too foggy, to say that the Open has lost its edge. The place may have gotten more posh, but the rains that shredded the schedule and every last nerve over the last four years remain a threat, and New York City's unique nature will

never allow a true calm. "The distractions are big here because you almost enjoy your time too much," Federer says. "Not meaning you go party, but you do too many things maybe you shouldn't be doing. In Wimbledon you rent your house, you eat and breathe tennis. When you come here, you go out at night for dinners. You catch up with friends. There's



#### PUMP 'EM UP

The raw emotion that fed McEnroe (left) and fueled Connors's epic run to the 1991 semifinals has been missing from the tournament in recent years.

and the crime rate keeps dropping and it's practically a crime to smoke, eat bad fat or down a big soda. You're chewing on this one afternoon when here comes the tennis embodiment of 1980s downtown angst, the punk prince. John McEnroe, 53, still looks the part: black T-shirt with suit pants, sunglasses, a Giants cap jammed on his head.

You pull an immediate U-turn. He's moving fast.

"I [still] get pumped up," McEnroe says of coming to the Open. "I've had a long summer, and my energy level, just from being here, is up 15 to 20 percent. I'll walk around, and people are saying, for the most part, good things—and you just get... up."

Then again, McEnroe isn't the rebel he was in his prime, when matches felt like war and "every-one," he says, "seemed like an adversary." In fact, the only thing in tennis

## THE ONLY THING IN TENNIS THAT HAS UNDERGONE A MORE RADICAL MAKEOVER THAN THE OPEN IS MCENROE, THE SUPERBRAT CUM TENNIS COMMENTATOR.

many more things you can follow and do, so that brings challenges."

Young Americans hitting the place for the first time feel like their heads are going to explode. "The energy was something I'd never felt before," says Ryan Harrison of his minirun (including qualifying) to the second round in 2010. "You always hear that it's the most incredible tournament, but you never can really understand what people are talking about—and I didn't—until you play. That was incredible."

Maybe this is just life now in Mayor Bloomberg's New York, where tourists take their kids to Times Square

that has undergone a more radical makeover than the Open is McEnroe himself, the Superbrat cum television commentator, often seen poking fun of his younger self in ads for American Express and National Car Rental. Once, McEnroe would've found pre-match interviews or deafening music during changeovers "ludicrous," he says.

"Now I think it would've been sort of cool to hear some music."

You hear this, and it's fair to wonder if tennis even needs a brash U.S. Open anymore. After Open tennis began in 1968, petulant, hyperactive adolescent behavior seemed the perfect way to keep the world watching. But like McEnroe now, the pro game

**SI AT THE OPEN**

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every one  
comes home



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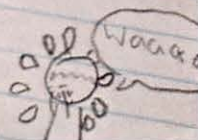
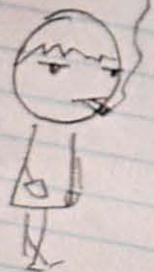
A TIP FROM A  
**FORMER  
SMOKER**

# LET YOUR KIDS INSPIRE YOU TO QUIT.

Beatrice, Quit at age 37  
New York

Nick age: 11  
Dear Mom, Smoking:  
Thank you mom for qu  
I know you can do it.  
d thing to do but sm  
you, so you are saving  
I'm lucky to have parents li  
and Daddy 'cause maybe  
parents would probably say "o  
just a kid" but you are the b  
in the world! :)

Don't Smoke!



There are a lot of reasons to quit smoking.  
Don't stop trying until you find yours. Beatrice did it.  
You can too. For free help, call **1-800-QUIT-NOW**.



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention  
[www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)





#### FEELING THE LOVE

Thanks to vocal fan support, the cavernous confines of Ashe Stadium felt "cozy" for Roddick during the Open's first week.

is a sport well into middle age. The use of replay has all but eliminated verbal abuse, and the top players treat officials and each other mostly with respect, making episodes like Serena Williams's Open meltdowns seem downright bizarre.

You're almost convinced, but then you find McEnroe's onetime doubles partner, CBS commentator Mary Carillo. Every year, as a kid growing up in nearby Douglaston, Queens, she'd end her summers at the Open. It's home. "For me, what started out as a game became a sport, and now it's a business," she says. "I'm not naive: I'm wistful. And it's not just this place that has become corporate. The players have too. They're brands—the Federer brand, the Sharapova brand. Maybe some things have to change,

but it's no secret why the Grandstand produces so many of the best moments here: The fans still feel like they're right there with the players. They get to see 'em sweat and see 'em curse. When Connors made his great run, the fans at Armstrong felt like they were helping him win. I miss that."

**T**hat was last Thursday. In the following days Carillo's words began to feel like an incantation, summoning the very forces she thought had fled Flushing for good. Roddick's press conference dwelled mostly on retirement, but he mentioned Connors's run in '91 and how much he loved Ashe at night. "The most electric atmosphere in our sport," he said.

Once Roddick, coached by Connors from

2006 to '08, rolled Tomic in straight sets on Friday, you felt something stir. You watched Roddick exhorting the crowd, loping in his U.S.-flag shoes, grinning on court like never before. "The stadium, that's the smallest it's felt for me," he said. "It almost felt cozy."

Then you talk to Connors. He had noticed too. "When I was working with Andy, I said, If you let 'em, those 25,000 people will help you win," Connors said. "And it takes him to say that he's retiring to see it and to feel it. I guess, better late than never."

Roddick was asking for help. And once he took the first set from his third-round opponent, Fabio Fognini, on Sunday afternoon, the comparison became unavoidable: It was also Connors's 60th birthday, and during the changeover a montage of Jimbo moments unspooled. Roddick, shoulder aching, sat watching clips of matches he attended as a nine-year-old. When he walked out to serve, the voice-over with a hint of that old New York accent commanded, "Andy: Like Connors in '91—a big run. Let's go."

In the second-set tiebreak, the moment for which you come to the Open—the kind that you'd almost forgotten amid the pomp and money and celebrity nonsense—occurred. With the score tied 1-1, someone screamed, "Nice shoes, Andy!" and then Roddick and Fognini cut loose with a stunning 20-stroke rally that Roddick finished off with a vintage forehand pass. The crowd erupted. Roddick won the next three points to go up 5-1, wagging his finger as the clamor grew.

At set point, he walked to the service line. Up in the TV booth Carillo quoted Connors's famous words from '91: "This is what they wanted!" A cool wind began to blow, the Open's first hint of fall. When the match was over, with Roddick winning in four sets, he spoke into a microphone, his voice echoing all the way to the top of the stadium. He didn't sound like himself. "These last couple days have been really humbling," Roddick said. "I love this place, and I love you, and I'm having a blast. I'm going to give my all here."

Within 10 minutes, Frank Ayala had stepped out on the catwalk along the drawboard. He took three steps up the ladder and flattened the score—7-5, 7-6 (1), 4-6, 6-4—on the blue wall. Below, hundreds stood watching, necks craned, camera phones poised. Ayala stripped off the vinyl backing, and when he stepped down to reveal Roddick's name, people whooped and clapped. It wasn't Ellen, but nobody seemed to mind. □



COLLEGE FOOTBALL

05..04..YOU'RE NOT A  
03..02..BUT YOU **WILL**

The do-or-die life of kickers—outsiders in their own game—forges a bond





# WHEN A REAL PLAYER... L MAKE THIS MUCH...

that connects them across generations, and misses **BY LEE JENKINS**

## REBOOTED

Williamson (19) missed two game-winners in the Fiesta Bowl, but last Saturday he was 2 for 2, including this 20-yarder that put Stanford up for good against San Jose State with 13 minutes to go.

Photograph by  
**JED JACOBSON**





**T**en years after the kick that changed his life, Phil Brabbs walked onto the patio of a coffee shop last Thursday and took three steps back, two to the left. Moments earlier he'd looked like any other suntanned tourist in Emerald Isle, N.C., checking his e-mail at the Beans-N-Screens Internet Café. Now he was standing over an imaginary left hash mark, in his sandals, reciting Philippians 4:13. It was the verse he chose at Michigan Stadium on Aug. 31, 2002, with five seconds remaining and the Wolverines trailing Washington 29-28. Brabbs was a junior at Ann Arbor who took out student loans because he was not on scholarship. Until that day he had never attempted a field goal in college. Early in the first quarter he missed wide left, and late in the second he missed left again—a snap hook that barely rose more than 10 feet off the ground. At halftime Brabbs was booed by the sellout crowd as he jogged into the locker room, where he sat with his head in his hands. Before the third quarter he missed every one of his warmups, all to the left. Coaches benched Brabbs in favor of his best friend, Troy Nienberg.

With 1:24 left in the fourth quarter, Nienberg pushed a go-ahead 27-yard field goal to the right, and Brabbs told himself, Not only am I going to get lynched, my best friend is going to get lynched with me. But an unfathomable sequence ensued: a Washington three-and-out; a fourth-down pass to Michigan receiver Braylon Edwards that was dropped, ruled a fumble (in the days before replay) and recovered by another Wolverine; and, finally, a too-many-men-on-the-field penalty against the Huskies that set up a 44-yard field goal try. Lloyd Carr didn't summon Brabbs so much as shove him. "Get out there," the coach growled. As Brabbs loped onto the field, he looked at the stands and noticed that maybe 10% of the fans had gone. Still, about 100,000 remained. "I was the last guy they wanted to see," Brabbs says. Michigan receiver Ronald Bellamy grabbed him. "You've got this," he barked.

In the movie *Wildcats*, a 1986 football comedy, head coach Goldie Hawn approaches her kicker late in a game and tells him, "You make this... and every girl in the free world will want you." The stakes for college kickers today are, if possible, even higher: glory or ignominy, immortality or oblivion, love letters or death threats. You can be Auburn's Wes Byrum, whose 19-yard field goal to win the BCS championship two years ago has been commemorated with a limited-edition painting (\$395 for an 18 by 24), or Florida State's Gerry Thomas, whose missed 34-yarder against Miami 21 years ago still prompts jeers of "wide right." Last season the Sugar Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl were won by kickers, after they were both lost by the opposing kickers. Four teams were eliminated from national title consideration because of foot faults. Alabama could have



been one of them, flubbing four field goals in a November loss to LSU, but Crimson Tide kicker Jeremy Shelley drained five to beat the Tigers in the rematch. "It's kind of unfair," says former Rutgers kicker Jeremy Ito, who hammered a game-winner from 28 yards to topple Louisville in 2006. "The good feelings you get from making one don't outweigh the bad feelings you get from missing one."

We celebrate the kicker because, in many cases, he reminds us of ourselves. He's not 300 pounds; he wasn't recruited out of elementary school; and he isn't going to declare early for the draft. We ridicule him, of course, for the same reason. "A lot of fans think they can do a better job," says former USC kicker Adam Abrams, who made the go-ahead field goal in the 1996 Rose Bowl and a game-winner a year later at Notre Dame. "That's where some of the hostility comes from."

NFL kickers are under similar stress, but they don't go to class with their critics the

#### RIGHT FOOTED

Ito (below) beat No. 3 Louisville on a last-second blast in 2006, while Brabbs recovered his stroke in the fourth quarter against Washington in '02, a resiliency evident later in his fight against cancer.

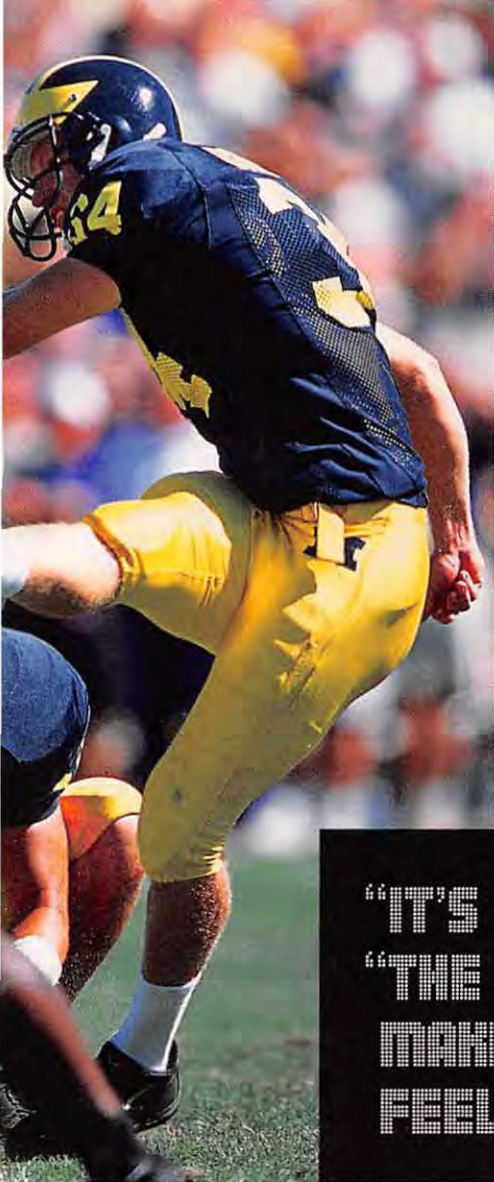
next day, baseball caps pulled low over their eyes as the professor takes roll. The pros have learned over the years how to reconcile jubilation and despair. The collegians are often no more seasoned in the spotlight than Brabbs. They receive little individual coaching at their schools. They practice alone before their teammates hit the field. They lean on one another, a widespread fraternity of current and former kickers, because no one else can relate. They are in action for only seconds a game, adding up to mere minutes a season. But in those throbbing moments they create memories that will forever inspire them, or haunt them, or both.

**I** felt like I was frozen in time," says Brabbs, "and then I saw the ball fly between the uprights, and I woke up." He didn't know what to do, so he ran, as fast as he could toward midfield until Bellamy caught him and wrestled him down. A hundred teammates leaped on top of them. Bel-



TIM LARSEN/AP (ITO); JOHN BIEVER





left ankle. Doctors discovered a blood clot in his left leg and, a few months later, another in his right. The day after Brabbs turned 28, he received a diagnosis of multiple myeloma, a cancer of the blood.

He chose the most aggressive treatment: two bone-marrow transplants and seven cycles of chemotherapy. "You're completely exhausted, lying on your back, and you have a lot of time to think," Brabbs says. "I'd never really savored the kick—I just sort of stowed it away in my heart—but I started to reflect on it a lot. I tapped into the hope from that game. I asked myself, Why can't you do it again?"

This spring, tests revealed that Brabbs was free of the myeloma protein, and in June he delivered the commencement address at Frankenmuth (Mich.) High. He knew what the administrators were expecting, a speech

"I was a dumb, cocky kid, and I didn't realize the gravity of the situation. That's what still bothers me. I wasn't ready." At Lincoln (Fla.) High, Mowrey developed a routine he followed every time his team crossed the 50-yard line: Warm up into the net, visualize the kick, strap on the helmet. When Florida State coach Bobby Bowden turned to Mowrey with eight seconds left and the Seminoles down 19-16, his helmet was still in his hand. "Oh, s---," Mowrey said.

Players coming off the field were asking, "Why are we kicking?" Mowrey was wondering the same thing. All of a sudden the snap was down, and the 39-yard field goal was up. "You know how people talk about their life flashing in front of their eyes?" Mowrey says. "I saw a flash of every kick I'd ever hit." Mowrey belly flopped to the turf, and after he returned to Tallahassee he found notes on his

**"IT'S KIND OF UNFAIR," SAYS ITO.  
"THE GOOD FEELINGS YOU GET FROM  
MAKING ONE DON'T OUTWEIGH THE BAD  
FEELINGS YOU GET FROM MISSING."**

lamy shrieked at the bottom of the dog pile. "I could have died right there," Brabbs says, "and I'd have died happy." He was the last one to the locker room, where the captains stood on their chairs and led the team in "The Victors," a Michigan tradition. Carr left one chair open for Brabbs. After the fight song and the press conference and the celebratory dinner with his family at Applebee's—"I was like a presidential candidate!" Brabbs marvels—he went to his girlfriend's apartment. He was asleep by 10:30 p.m.

Besides the Michigan hard cores, no one heard from Phil Brabbs again. He injured his quad later in the season and tore it in the summer. He made two field goals the rest of his career. He graduated with a degree in engineering, landed a job as an IT project manager and married his girlfriend, Cassie. They had a son, Ocean, and two daughters, Iris and Ruby. They bought a house six blocks from Michigan Stadium. In 2007, while Brabbs was training for a marathon, he felt a pain in his

about his victories, over Washington and cancer. But if they wanted him to gloat, they should have invited a receiver. Brabbs looked at the students and told them, "Be a failure. It's the misses that propel you forward."

When Brabbs was a freshman, Michigan beat Alabama 35-34 in the Orange Bowl after Ryan Pflugner pushed an extra point in overtime. Most Wolverines rejoiced but not Brabbs. "It didn't feel right," he says. "That kid had to go home, and who knows what happened."

Pflugner went to medical school and became an orthopedic surgeon. Thomas, who famously missed right against Miami, became a lawyer. So did Dan Mowrey, who followed Thomas at Florida State, and missed right against the Hurricanes a year later. Mowrey nailed three field goals that afternoon at the Orange Bowl and never imagined the Seminoles would need a fourth. "We were driving at the end, and I was thinking, We're going to score and beat these guys," Mowrey says.

car begging him to transfer. Even some of his friends claimed they could have split those uprights. He led them all inside Doak Campbell Stadium, placed the ball on the left hash at the 29 and implored them to try. Mowrey lost his starting job as a junior, but Florida State played for the national championship in Miami, and on his first day back at the Orange Bowl he walked to the left hash. He put the ball on a tee, clobbered it into the seats and spit on the spot. The Seminoles won the title with a last-minute 22-yarder by Mowrey's replacement, Scott Bentley, and a last-minute shank by Nebraska kicker Byron Bennett.

The scars did not fully heal until Mowrey was a senior, at dinner with his girlfriend, and a patron shouted, "Hey, Wide Right! What's up, Wide Right?" Mowrey rose. "I'm Dan Mowrey, and yeah, I missed wide right," he said. "If you want to put up a billboard, I'll help you pay for it. But if you're just having a bad day, come over here right now and I'll give you a hug." Mowrey regained his job



and made his final kick at Doak Campbell, an extra point that sealed a tie after an unforgettable 28-point fourth-quarter comeback against Florida. Mowrey now tutors the Gators' kicker, Caleb Sturgis, and tells him, "I want you to beat everybody but FSU." And what if Florida-FSU comes down to a Sturgis field goal? "I'd rather he make it," Mowrey says. "I don't want to see a guy miss."

Two years ago, Boise State was 10-0 and riding a 24-game winning streak, with a senior kicker who was the leading scorer in the history of the Western Athletic Conference. But in Week 11, against Nevada, with the score tied in the final seconds, Kyle Brotzman missed a 26-yard field goal to the right. He tried to compensate in overtime and missed a 29-yarder to the left. Instead of playing Auburn for the BCS championship, the Broncos faced Utah in the Las Vegas Bowl—and went from a payout of \$21.2 million to \$1 million. Mowrey wrote Brotzman a letter. "I told him that one kick doesn't define who you are," Mowrey recalls. "And I think I also told him that sometimes, you just have to say, F--- it." Mowrey asks what Brotzman is doing today. "Give him my love," he says.

**T**he two field goals happened so fast, back-to-back, I didn't have a chance to forget about the first one," says Brotzman, now with the Utah Blaze of the Arena Football League. "It was in my head, and once that happens, you're set up to miss again." Social media have made kicking more hazardous than ever. "People called and left messages," Brotzman says, "but more than that it was threats on Facebook from gamblers who lost money."

A week after the game Jeret (Speedy) Peterson, a Boise native and three-time Olympic aerial skier, contacted Brotzman through a mutual friend and visited him. Peterson, who was sexually abused as a child and once saw a friend commit suicide in front of him, had long struggled with alcoholism and depression. "It's hard for some of us to open up and talk about our feelings," says Brotzman. "He wanted me to talk about what I was going through. It was a relief to get things off my back."

In July 2011, Peterson killed himself, and Brotzman thought about what he could do to honor him. "Speedy didn't know me, but he changed my life," Brotzman says. "I wanted to be there for someone in the same way." When Alabama missed all those

field goals against LSU, Brotzman wrote an empathetic e-mail to starting kicker Cade Foster and included his phone number. A week later he watched undefeated Boise State play TCU from his father's tailgating spot outside Broncos Stadium and recoiled when kicker Dan Goodale missed a 39-yard game-winning field goal. Again, Boise tumbled from the BCS to the Vegas Bowl. Brotzman texted Goodale immediately, went to practice the following week and sat with the despondent kicker in the film room. "It was anxiety," Brotzman says. "His mechanics fell apart in some areas, and he pushed the ball right, just like me."

Goodale had attempted only three field goals in his college career, none longer than 32 yards. But he was more experienced than



**MOWREY WAS AT DINNER WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND AND A PATRON SHOUTED, "HEY, WIDE RIGHT! WHAT'S UP, WIDE RIGHT?"**

Virginia Tech's Justin Myer, who had tried two heading into January's Sugar Bowl. Myer was supposed to be the third-string placekicker against Michigan, until starter Cody Journell was arrested two weeks before the game for breaking and entering (he was found guilty of a reduced charge of misdemeanor trespassing) and backup Tyler Weiss was sent home on a Greyhound bus for missing curfew in New Orleans. The Hokies are renowned for their special teams. At the beginning of every practice, coach Frank Beamer leads his kickers into Lane Stadium, then stands over their shoulders as they hold a field goal contest. The result of each boot is recorded in a notebook. The exercise is intense, but it lasts only 20 minutes, and the Virginia Tech specialists spend the rest of practice in roughly the same way as their counterparts across the country.

"We make snow cones from the ice in the medical cooler and fill them with Gatorade," says Collin

Carroll, a Virginia Tech long snapper for the past five years. "Then we sit by the fan in the shade. Sometimes we play touch football with each other or have a punt-pass-kick competition because it's the only thing we know how to do. That's why we're perpetually teased and mocked and borderline scorned." The week of the Sugar Bowl, Virginia Tech spent more time than usual on field goals during the team portion of practice, and Myer missed every one. "Guys were like, Are you kidding me?" Carroll says. "This is not going to be pretty." The Hokies hid their concern. Players told Myer they believed in him. Coaches promised not to yell at him. Carroll did not admit that his legs were shaking when Myer lined up for his first attempt at the Superdome. But the most shocking thing happened. Myer made it, and then he made another one, and two more after that. He was 4 for 4 heading into overtime.

After Myer sent a 37-yarder to the right, and Virginia Tech lost

SI.COM



Which team will need a big kick to win this weekend? Andy Staples previews the action every Friday in The Walkthrough at [SI.com/efb](http://SI.com/efb)





**SWING AND A...**  
Serna (left) was floored by his miss against Stanford, while Mowrey (3) crumbled after a loss to Miami and Goodale (41) pushed a 39-yarder that took Boise out of the BCS chase.



23-20, Beamer stood in the locker room and said, "What a great job Justin Myer did tonight." The team cheered. The best game of Myer's career ended with a miss. Myer and Carroll were both seniors, and on their way to the bus, the kicker told the snapper, "I feel like I did pretty well, but I really wish I made that last one." Carroll stifled a laugh. He didn't tell Myer what he was thinking: "Most obvious statement ever."

**U**2 released a song in 2001 called "Stuck in a Moment You Can't Get Out Of," and the accompanying video focuses on a fictional kicker named Paul Hewson, who clanks a game-winning field goal off the right post with three seconds left. While Bono wails from the stands, Hewson replays the kick in his head, driving himself so batty he starts to imagine the holder as a giant bunny rabbit. The video ends with a shot of Hewson in a mail carrier uniform, some 40 years down the road, set to the verse: "It's just a moment. This time will pass." Paul Hewson, U2 devotees may recall, is Bono's given name.

The idol of every distraught college kicker stands 5' 7" and is the assistant manager at a Sherwin Williams in Portland. A former Oregon State walk-on, Alexis Serna worked the graveyard shift as a janitor to make tuition, and his first game was on national television at LSU in 2004. Serna missed three extra points, the last in overtime, and the Beavers lost by one. As he cried in the locker room afterward, defensive players yelled at him, and he couldn't look any of them in the eye. Kickers start at the bottom of the



college football hierarchy, building goodwill three points at a time, but Serna had none in reserve. One e-mail from a supposed fan read, "Your parents are embarrassed of you." Another: "You should go kill yourself."

Serna also received a letter from a 12-year-old boy in Spokane named Austan Pierce, who was suffering from soft-tissue bone cancer. He encouraged the kicker to move on. Serna analyzed his gaffes with help from then Saints kicker John Carney and identified his problem. Usually, a kicker takes about 1.35 seconds between snap and contact. At LSU, Serna had taken about 1.19. "I was way too excited and moving way too fast," he says. "I wasn't seeing the ball." He was benched for a game, and when he returned against New Mexico, he was booed when he attempted a field goal. A week later, against Arizona State, he attempted his first extra point. "I was super scared; my body was really hot; and I didn't know how I was going to walk up to the ball," Serna says. He made that extra point, as well as every other one he tried over the next four years, 144 straight. He won

the Lou Groza Award in 2005, given to the nation's premier kicker, and when he was introduced on Senior Day in '07, the crowd at Reser Stadium grew so loud he couldn't hear the public-address announcer say his name.

From Oregon State to the CFL, Serna wrote the initials AP on his thumbs before every game, to remember Austan Pierce. Serna beams as he talks about Pierce, whose left leg was amputated in high school, but who now plays wheelchair basketball at Texas-Arlington. Serna still follows the Pac-12, and when Stanford freshman Jordan Williamson missed three field goals in the Fiesta Bowl, including a 35-yard game-winner at the end of regulation and a 43-yarder in overtime, he sent him a Facebook message that read in part: "You know you're a better kicker than that."

Williamson was one of the best last fall, making 11 of 12 field goals, before he tore a muscle in his groin and started hooking every ball left. "Part of our job is counseling," says former UCLA kicker Chris Sailer, who trains hundreds of FBS kickers, including Williamson. "A lot of guys get a job as a young player, falter early and can't get over it. I see that all the time." Since 1978, when Division I split, college field goal percentages have climbed from 58.8 to a record 73.8 in 2010, in part because so many kickers work with private coaches like Sailer. However, they still lag well behind their NFL brethren, who made 82.9% of field goals in '11.

Last Friday night at Stanford Stadium, with two seconds remaining in the first half against San Jose State, Williamson trotted out for his first field goal since the Fiesta Bowl. "It's still in my mind, and I think it always will be," Williamson said. "But it has to motivate you instead of break you." As he spoke, he was wearing a Fiesta Bowl cap. Several kickers contacted for this story asked about Williamson. They wanted to know how he was doing and whether he received their notes. They said they would watch him this season.

Out on the field Williamson took three steps back and two to the left, pausing only to draw an imaginary line between the uprights. He wiggled his arms, the way he always does, as if he's shaking out the tension. The field goal was 46 yards, the longest of Williamson's career, spotted on the troublesome left hash. He cleared his mind and swung his right leg.

He drilled it.





# The Other Half Of the Story

By  
*Melissa  
Segura*

Photograph by  
ROBERT BECK

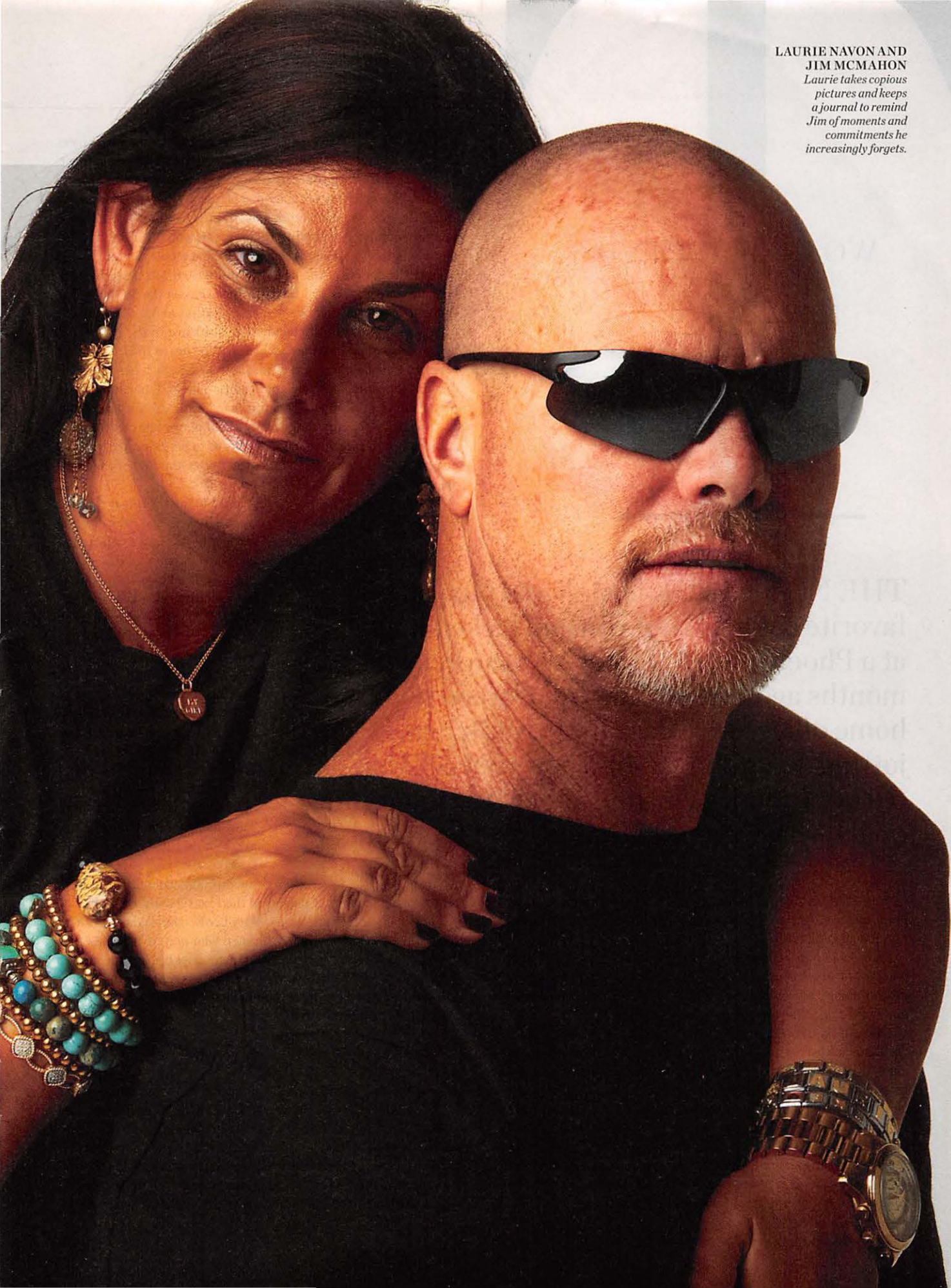
TOO OFTEN FORGOTTEN  
IN THE NFL CONCUSSION  
DEBATE ARE THE WIVES AND  
GIRLFRIENDS WHO BEAR  
THE BURDEN OF CARING FOR  
SUFFERING PLAYERS—AND  
WATCHING THE MEN THEY  
LOVE SLOWLY SLIP AWAY





LAURIE NAVON AND  
JIM MCMAHON

*Laurie takes copious  
pictures and keeps  
a journal to remind  
Jim of moments and  
commitments he  
increasingly forgets.*





## THE WOMEN BEHIND THE MEN

THE NOTEBOOK is pink and purple, his favorite colors. His girlfriend picked it up at a Phoenix-area HomeGoods store eight months ago. She shuttles it between their home office and a desk in their kitchen, jotting down things she knows her 53-year-old boyfriend, two-time Super Bowl-winning quarterback Jim McMahon, won't remember.

*May 28, 2012 Told JM about golf out in Mississippi for [country musician Steve] Azar. From Azar's heading to Mario's [Lemieux] event.*

A few pages later:

*On 6/5 told Mac we need to start to get organized for Azar's event and for Mario's. Looked at me like I have five heads. And he said, "I didn't think we were going to Azar's." After a few minutes, he looked at me and said, "Baby, you're right. Sorry. I forgot."*

Laurie Navon started the log to help McMahon, who played for the Bears and six other NFL teams between 1982 and '96, recall everything from which charity golf events he was scheduled to attend to why the plumbers were at the door. (*Plumber was here. Said we need to change our two toilets.*) Many of the other wives and girlfriends who care for retired professional football players—who, according to a 2009 University of Michigan study, may be five times more likely than other men their age to suffer from dementia—can relate to Navon's log. Its details might be unfamiliar, but overall it tells a familiar story. Theirs.

Navon, 46, is part of an unofficial sorority whose members meet at the occasional team reunion dinner or charity golf tournament. They recognize each other by the burdens they share and by the familiar characteristics of their mates: the slow shuffle, the empty stare, the non-sequitur replies to simple questions. Like Junior League members swapping recipes, the women trade tips for managing their partners' memory loss and mood swings.

Over the course of the last year, more than 140 lawsuits have been filed by players and their families against the NFL alleging that the league had concealed information about the dangers of repeated blows to the head. (The suits are in the process of being consolidated into one, which will be heard in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia. In response, the NFL, which has moved to dismiss the suits, said in a statement, "The NFL has long made player safety a priority and continues to do so. Any allegation that the NFL intentionally sought to mislead players has no merit. It stands in contrast to the league's actions to better protect players and advance the science and medical understanding of the management and treatment of concussions.")

The damages the plaintiffs allege include "loss of consortium," a nebulous legal phrase that really means a life tethered to a cellphone

for fear of missing a call from a confused partner who is standing outside a house he no longer recognizes; a sense that the couples' golden years have been taken away; and, for some of the women, a daily dose of antidepressants to help them withstand their partners' senseless rage.

These women are not only their partners' caretakers but also their voices and advocates. They led the fight for the NFL 88 Plan, a fund to help families pay for the care of former players with dementia. They have testified before Congress about the dangers of concussions. And they have served as the primary contacts for lawyers

representing the former players in their battle with the league.

Three such women are Navon, Mary Lee Kocourek and Mary Ann Easterling. They fell in love with men who played in the NFL in different decades, and they now find themselves bearing the burden of their partners' dementia in different ways. Each of them gave SI a glimpse into her life, revealing harsh realities that too often are part of life after football.

### *The Beginning*

Two years ago Laurie Navon would walk into the bedroom of the Scottsdale house she shares with McMahon and find him lying on the bed watching the ceiling fan go round and round. He slept so much—"hibernating," she joked—that she began to call him This Old Bear, not knowing that he was showing the first signs of dementia. When he did get out of bed to go to the mailbox or the hardware store, McMahon would kiss Navon goodbye, but



#### SPUNKY QB

McMahon never shied away from a hit, but the uninhibited style with which he played for 15 years in the NFL came with a cost: He suffered at least four concussions and was laid out countless times.



20 minutes later she'd find him in the kitchen, keys still in hand, struggling to remember where he wanted to go. Then there were the times he'd get up, stumble on something and accuse Navon of having rearranged their furniture in the middle of the night. Or the morning on the road when she woke up in the hotel bed to hear McMahon calling out for their Doberman, "Teddy. Teddy." When she rolled over to ask why, he told her, "Teddy will guide me to the bathroom."

"But we're not home," she said.

He looked around blankly. "That's right," he said.

McMahon today differs dramatically from the man Navon met at a golf tournament in Florida seven years ago. "I fell in love with him the minute I met him," she says. "There was something charismatic about him. He sparkled. He glowed. He was sweet and confident and funny and warm and compassionate. Total opposite of everything I'd ever heard about him." That glow began to dim after an event for McMahon's foundation before the Super Bowl in 2009. "That was the last time I saw Jim light, not heavy," Navon says.

"Sometimes it looks like the weight of the world is on his shoulders."

Navon dismissed McMahon's early symptoms as normal aging until 2007, when, on the eve of the Super Bowl, she caught a TV special featuring a discussion of brain trauma by Ann McKee and Chris Nowinski of the Sports Legacy Institute in Boston. Shortly after that program Navon called Nowinski to say, "I think Mac's got some serious issues going on."

Brain scans and other tests recommended by Nowinski confirmed that McMahon was suffering from early-onset dementia, a condition the couple connects to the four documented concussions that McMahon suffered during his 15-year career, including a 1986 season-ending body slam by Green Bay's Charles Martin. That year a *Chicago Sun-Times* story had predicted facetiously that McMahon would one day wear the phrase BRAIN-DAMAGED on his famous headbands. His diagnosis turned that joke into a grim reality.

These days Navon and McMahon play backgammon to keep his mind active. She printed a card with his vital statistics and



# THE WOMEN BEHIND THE MEN

her phone number and stuck it in his wallet lest he ever get lost. She also programmed their car's GPS with their address and her phone number. Navon makes sure the home alarm is on at all times in case he tries to wander off alone, and she tries to travel with him as much as possible—especially since he called her four years ago after accidentally boarding a flight to Tampa instead of Chicago. She has their picture taken frequently, in case he wakes up one day and no longer remembers her.

"He could stay like this for the next 20 years, which I would take," Navon says. "I can handle it." But in recent months Navon has noticed a new symptom in McMahon. He drops to his knees, breaks into a cold sweat and turns a ghostly white, complaining of a pain that he compares to having an ice pick in his brain. It lasts a minute. All Navon can do is watch.

## The Middle

The first sign of trouble for Mary Lee Kocourek was that her husband, Dave, was forgetting things and sleeping more than usual. Dave, a four-time Pro Bowl tight end in the 1960s with the Chargers, Dolphins and Raiders, was her high school sweetheart. For years he'd arranged his shoes by color and function, but around 1999 he began to seem disorganized. He frequently misplaced his wallet or his AFL championship ring. She took him to a doctor in 2002, and Dave, then 64, was given a diagnosis of early dementia.

In 2005, Dave took the couple's dachshund, Tootsie Roll, for a walk near their house on Marco Island, Fla., only to end up at a police station looking for his other dog—although the couple did not have one. In a three-day period in 2010, police twice had to be called in to help search for Dave. (Once, Mary Lee says, they prepared to dispatch search-and-rescue boats into the Gulf of Mexico.) The first time, he turned up, with Tootsie Roll, in the lobby of a Marriott two miles from their house; the next time, in a church parking lot.

Mary Lee became even more vigilant after she walked in on Dave preparing to brush his teeth with a razor. "When you see a man that was so big and so strong and so nice and gentle, and he doesn't know the difference between a toothbrush and a razor . . ." Mary Lee says, crying. "He could have cut his mouth wide-open. After [he] got progressively worse, I had to watch everything he did. I couldn't let him take a shower or do any of the things you need to do every morning without me being there. I couldn't chance it."

Mary Lee, a real estate broker, began taking Dave to work with her. The office managers assigned him a desk while Mary Lee worked on her listings. At home she relished his nap times. "This is terrible to say, but it was sort of a help that he did sleep, because then I could do other things around the house," she says.

By 2008 Mary Lee, exhausted by the round-the-clock care, persuaded her husband to attend



**MARY LEE AND DAVE KOCOUREK**  
Dave (83) didn't display symptoms until 30 years after his career ended. When her own health began to fail, Mary Lee had to put him in a nursing home.

thrice-weekly adult-day-care sessions by telling him that the program administrator, a family friend, needed his help. The day care helped, but in August 2010 Mary Lee needed back surgery, which would entail a lengthy recovery during which she wouldn't be able to care for Dave. That meant putting him in a nursing home.

The heartbreaking decision to place a loved one in institutional care is not limited to NFL families, of course. But the process is often made even more difficult by the simple fact that traits that are considered a virtue in professional football players—towering size, hulking frames—are liabilities to nursing homes and the companies that insure them. The wife of one former player struggled to find a facility with a bed big enough to fit her husband, a former offensive lineman.

The NFL does help defray the \$76,000 per year it costs Mary Lee to keep Dave in a nursing home, but she still feels the financial strain. Her husband never earned more than \$35,000 in a season. She bristles at message-board postings and call-in radio chatter suggesting that plaintiffs in the concussion litigation are motivated by greed rather than need. "They should have told us something about repeated head injuries," Mary Lee says between tears. "I've lost the love of my life. These are supposed to be our golden years, but they certainly are not. I've gone into a deep depression, and I'm on medication. I had to put my husband in a home. . . . I just flipped."

Much of Mary Lee's social circle has vanished. "When you're not a couple, you're not included in many things," she says. Even if she wanted to take Dave to a restaurant, she couldn't because he wears adult diapers. Trying to go to a doctor's appointment is often complicated by Dave's refusal to get in the car. "Sometimes I have to get some people in the street to help me," she says.

Their time together is mostly limited to Mary Lee's nightly stops at the nursing home for a happy hour of apple juice and chips with her husband. She does her best to talk to him, but sometimes he speaks only gibberish, indecipherable even to the woman who's been married to him for 54 years. He doesn't know the day of the week, the month or the president—though he has been heard singing his alma mater's fight song, *On, Wisconsin!*

"I'm lonely, and I'm sure it's lonely for him, too," Mary Lee says. "I just wouldn't want anyone else to go through this."

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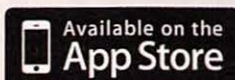
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“When you see a man that was so big and so strong, and *he doesn’t know the difference between a toothbrush and a razor . . .*,” Mary Lee says, crying. “He could have cut his mouth wide-open.”

## The End

Mary Ann Easterling heard her husband, Ray, say it time and time again: No nursing home. Which is why on April 18, the day before he took his own life, Ray, 62, was grilling his primary-care physician about how long it would be before what remained of his mind would wither.

“Three years,” the doctor said.

On the car ride home Ray, a member of the Falcons’ Gritz Blitz defense that in 1977 set an NFL record for fewest points allowed in a season, turned to Mary Ann and said, “I don’t believe what he said.”

Mary Ann had decided to take him to the doctor following an episode earlier in the week. Her cellphone had rung while she was at her job as an administrator and teacher at a home-school collaborative near their house in Richmond. She heard Ray’s voice on the other end, frantic. He was on his way to the post office but suddenly didn’t recognize his surroundings. Trying to keep her voice from registering any emotion, Mary Ann helped him divine his location: He was outside the building they had lived in for a decade, years ago, directly across the street from the post office.

“This was another step along the road,” Mary Ann says of the incident. “We had been stepping down like that for three years. In my heart I was sad for him because I knew he [would no longer] feel right about going out by himself.”

Mary Ann first noticed Ray’s decline in the late 1980s, about a decade after he retired from an eight-season pro career. The normally vibrant, devoted man she’d met at a Thursday-night Bible-study class in 1975, the man who prayed with her every day, had become sullen and depressed, and he began having outbursts of blistering anger. “Little things would set him off,” Mary Ann says. “You feel like you’ve got to walk on eggshells.”

By the 1990s Ray, who’d had a successful career in financial services, began making impulsive and risky decisions, a hallmark, some scientists say, of chronic traumatic encephalopa-

thy, a deterioration of the brain believed to be linked to repeated blows to the head. He took out a line of credit on their house and invested in a nutrition business. More troubling to Mary Ann, Ray didn’t do what he usually did before making a big decision: pray with her. The business failed, and they were forced to sell their home and live in the office across from the post office—the building that Ray later wouldn’t be able to recognize.

As the years passed, Mary Ann’s fears grew. Ray was combative with co-workers, and by 2008 he could no longer make business presentations without losing his train of thought or button his shirts without Mary Ann’s help; the fine motor skills in his hands were all but gone. In the last year of her husband’s life, Mary Ann listened to him tell wild stories about people following him as he jogged and complain that she didn’t care about him when she left the house for work.

Then while surfing the Internet one evening in 2010, Mary Ann found a report suggesting a link between her husband’s symptoms and his football career. Three months later a battery of tests confirmed a diagnosis of early-onset dementia. “Although I was very sad,” Mary Ann says, “it was also a huge relief to know that it was something organic that was wrong.”

On the morning of April 19, Mary Ann found Ray’s lifeless body next to a handgun. That his behavior—and his decision to take his life—stemmed from brain damage he might have incurred

as a football player gives her, oddly, a sense of peace. “It’s a disease that eats at the brain,” she says, “and the player can’t help it.”

Not long after Mary Ann buried Ray, a woman from their church whose husband suffered from Alzheimer’s approached her to say, “Do not feel guilty about feeling relieved.”

“It was a relief,” Mary Ann admits, “because every day [with Ray] was a conflict. Every day was like I was going to war—and not physically; it was all mental and emotional.” She finds comfort in her faith and in Ray’s final words to her in the note he left: *I am ready to meet my Lord and savior.*

The last three decades have made her tougher, Mary Ann says. Which explains in part why, even after Ray’s death, she presses on in her legal battle against the NFL, intent that the league create the kind of medical-monitoring program that could have benefited her late husband.

Ray’s framed Falcons jersey, his old football helmet and an old game ball still sit in his home office, exactly as he left them. On the ball are written the words YOU PAID THE PRICE. Mary Ann looks at it occasionally, knowing that the inscription applies to many other men—and so, too, to the women who love them. □

MARY ANN AND RAY EASTERLING  
Ray (32) played through pain with the Falcons, but, Mary Ann believes, he couldn’t bear the prospect of slipping deeper into dementia.





# If You Bought a TV, Monitor or Notebook Computer That Contained an LCD Flat Panel Screen

***File a Claim Now to Get Money from Settlements Totaling Almost \$1.1 Billion.***

This is the second notice in this case. Settlements have now been reached with AU Optronics, LG Display and Toshiba ("New Settlements"). The Court previously approved Settlements with seven other Defendants.

**Members of the Statewide Damages Classes can file a claim now to get a payment from all Settlements (see below).**

## **What are the lawsuits about?**

The lawsuits claim that the Defendants conspired to fix, raise, maintain or stabilize prices of thin film transistor liquid crystal display ("TFT-LCD" or "LCD") Flat Panels, resulting in overcharges to consumers who bought TVs, monitors or notebook computers containing Flat Panels. The Defendants deny Plaintiffs' allegations or that consumers paid any overcharge. The Court has not decided who is right.

## **Who is included in the lawsuits?**

This case has recovered money for consumers in 24 states and the District of Columbia and governmental entities in eight states, and nationwide injunctive relief to stop the Defendants' alleged behavior.

**Statewide Damages Classes:** Generally, include any person or business that indirectly purchased a TFT-LCD Flat Panel, which had been incorporated in a TV, monitor or notebook computer, from any of the Defendants or Quanta Display Inc., from January 1, 1999 to December 31, 2006, for their own use and not for resale, while residing in the 24 states or the District of Columbia. "Indirectly" means that you purchased the product containing the LCD Flat Panel from someone other than the manufacturer of the LCD Flat Panel.

The purchase must have been made in the same state where the person or business resided. Businesses in Rhode Island and Missouri and indirect purchasers who also had direct purchases (previously not included) may now participate in all 10 Settlements.

The 24 states are: AZ, AR, CA, FL, HI, IA, KS, ME, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, NV, NM, NY, NC, ND, RI, SD, TN, VT, WV and WI. See specific class definitions at [www.LCDclass.com](http://www.LCDclass.com).

**Nationwide Class:** Includes any person or business that indirectly purchased in the United States, a TFT-LCD Flat Panel, which had been incorporated in a TV, monitor or notebook computer, from any of the Defendants or Quanta Display Inc., between January 1, 1999 and February 13, 2012, for their own use and not for resale, and resided in the United States on February 13, 2012.

**Attorneys General Actions:** The Attorneys General of AR, CA, FL, MI, MO, NY, WV and WI are participating in these Settlements to resolve related claims arising from the same allegations as asserted in the class actions: (1) on behalf of state residents under state law and the doctrine of *parens patriae*, which allows a state to bring a lawsuit on behalf of its citizens, and/or for governmental entities; and (2) for civil penalties.

## **What do the Settlements provide?**

Three New Settlements totaling \$543,500,000 are being presented to the Court for approval. In addition, AU Optronics and LG Display are making payments to resolve claims for civil penalties brought by the Attorneys General. To the extent AU Optronics, LG Display and Toshiba continue to manufacture LCD Flat Panels, they have agreed not to engage in conduct that is at issue in these lawsuits and/or will establish (or maintain) a program to educate their employees about complying with the law. The combined Settlement Fund (totaling \$1,082,055,647) will be used to pay individual and business consumers in the 24 states and DC. A portion of the Settlement Fund will be distributed to governmental entities in the eight states with Attorneys General Actions.

Payments will be based on the number of valid claims filed as well as on the number/type of LCD Flat Panel products you purchased. It is expected that a minimum payment of \$25 will be made to all Class Members who submit a valid claim. It is possible that any money remaining after claims are paid will be distributed to charities, governmental entities or other beneficiaries approved by the Court. More details are provided in the Settlement Agreements and other documents available at [www.LCDclass.com](http://www.LCDclass.com), or by calling the toll-free number below.

The cost to administer the Settlements, attorneys' fees, costs and expenses, and awards to the Class Representatives will come out of the Settlement Fund. Plaintiffs' counsel will request attorneys' fees not to exceed one-third of the Settlement Fund, plus reimbursement of costs and expenses.

## **How can I get a payment?**

You must submit a Claim Form to get a payment. You can submit a claim online or by mail. The deadline to submit a claim is **December 6, 2012**. Claim Forms are available at the website or by calling 1-855-225-1886.

## **What are my rights?**

The Court will hold a hearing on **November 29, 2012** to consider whether to approve the New Settlements. If you stay in the Classes, you may object to the New Settlements, plan of distribution, attorneys' fees and costs, and awards to Class Representatives by **October 9, 2012**. You or your own lawyer may appear and speak at the hearing at your own expense.

With the exception noted below, the first notice gave you an opportunity to exclude yourself. If you did not exclude yourself, you have given up your right to sue the Defendants on your own for the claims in this case. Only individuals and businesses that indirectly purchased an LCD Flat Panel: (1) while residing in Arkansas; (2) while residing in Missouri or Rhode Island that was not primarily for household or personal use; or (3) that had a direct purchase in addition to an indirect purchase, have until **October 9, 2012** to exclude themselves from the litigation involving AU Optronics, LG Display and Toshiba. If you reside outside of the 24 states and the District of Columbia you keep any right you may have to sue the Defendants for monetary relief.

**For More Information: 1-855-225-1886 [www.LCDclass.com](http://www.LCDclass.com)**

**Text: "LCDclass" to 96000** (Text messaging rates may apply)



# And Now, What They Really Think

By PHIL TAYLOR | →



astically tell everyone who's been harassing us about being an all-male club that they can kiss our azaleas. Time to go find somebody else to annoy. It is a significant and positive time in our club's history because we have finally realized that even if we open our doors to selected female millionaires, the world will still be full of riffraff whom we can continue to exclude."

WHAT HE SAID: " " —*Knicks owner James Dolan, who has not offered a word of public explanation for why he did not re-sign point guard Jeremy Lin*

WHAT HE MEANT: "Not talking to the media is so cool, don't you think? It makes me seem really smart and mysterious, like I've got this top-secret master plan. I feel like that magician who never speaks while his partner does all the talking, that guy Teller. Or is it Penn? No, no, it's Teller. And what about animals? Animals don't give interviews, and they do O.K. for themselves. Like panthers. Panthers are really quiet and stealthy, and people think panthers are awesome and . . . what was the question again? Why did I let our most popular player, the best thing to happen to the team in the last decade, walk away for nothing? Oh, shoot, I don't really have a good answer for that. Good thing I don't talk to the media."

WHAT HE SAID: "I don't think Bobby should be fired." —*Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia, on embattled manager Bobby Valentine*

WHAT HE MEANT: "I don't think Bobby should be fired. I think he should stand in the middle of Harvard Square for 24 hours with a sign that

Sometimes it sounds as if sports figures are speaking a different, more carefully crafted language—as though a staff of flacks, spin doctors and lawyers had extracted every trace of candor from their comments. Wouldn't it be refreshing if every self-edited quote could be passed through a translator so we could hear what the speaker is really thinking? It might sound like this.

WHAT HE SAID: "While we don't endorse these guys who are taking PEDs, we also want to be known for being an organization that cares about the person as a whole, not just the player. He served his time. Now it's time for all of us to move on." —*Giants manager Bruce Bochy on activating reliever Guillermo Mota after a 100-game suspension for a drug-policy violation Mota attributed to cough syrup*

WHAT HE MEANT: "While we don't endorse guys taking PEDs, we do endorse winning the NL West. We also want to be known as an organization that cares not just about the person but also about pounding the freaking Dodgers every year. Now it's time for all of us to move on—to planning Melky Cabrera's welcome back party."

WHAT HE SAID: "We've got a lot of work to do. . . . We really didn't perform at the level we need to in any area." —*Patriots coach Bill Belichick after a 30–28 preseason loss to the Buccaneers*

WHAT HE MEANT: "We've got a lot of work to do—to avoid yawning our way through the 17-week regular season. Look at our division. Who's going to challenge us? Our quarterback's wife—what's-her-name, the supermodel—probably throws a tighter spiral than anyone on the Jets. Miami and Buffalo? The last time those two finished ahead of us, cellphones were the size of carry-on luggage."

WHAT HE SAID: "This is a joyous occasion as we enthusiastically welcome Secretary Condoleezza Rice and Darla Moore as members of Augusta National Golf Club. . . . This is a significant and positive time in our Club's history." —*Masters chairman Billy Payne*

WHAT HE MEANT: "This is a joyous occasion as we enthusi-

WOULDN'T IT BE  
REFRESHING IF  
EVERY QUOTE BY  
A SPORTS FIGURE  
COULD BE PASSED  
THROUGH A  
TRANSLATOR?

says, I WILL NEVER AGAIN UTTER A CRITICAL WORD ABOUT KEVIN YOUKILIS. I think he should have to do wind sprints at a Celtics practice with Kevin Garnett ripping into him every step of the way. I think he should have to let the Bruins aim slap shots at his five hole. I think he should be stuck on an unventilated elevator with the Patriots' offensive line after two-a-days."

WHAT HE SAID: "Tim Tebow seems to be a wonderful young man, and he's got just a great winning attitude. . . . But there's going to be a lot of tension in that situation, so it'll be pretty interesting to see how it plays itself out." —*President Obama, on Jets quarterbacks Tebow and Mark Sanchez*

WHAT HE MEANT: "Tebow's a wonderful young man, but trust me, when two guys are competing for the same job, eventually it gets ugly. Fortunately, I find that awkwardness can be entertaining. For instance, I saw this older gentleman on TV the other night, standing in front of a big crowd while holding an imaginary conversation with—get this—an empty chair. I couldn't stop watching. Hilarious!"

WHAT HE SAID: "What I see is terrible. What I see is pathetic, including myself." —*Marlins manager Ozzie Guillen, on the wretched play of his team, in last place in the NL East*

WHAT HE MEANT: No translation necessary. Can't put it any more plainly than that. □



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# INSIDE THE NFL™



## FIELD TESTED ANALYSIS

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**SHOWTIME**

BACK TO FOOTBALL

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